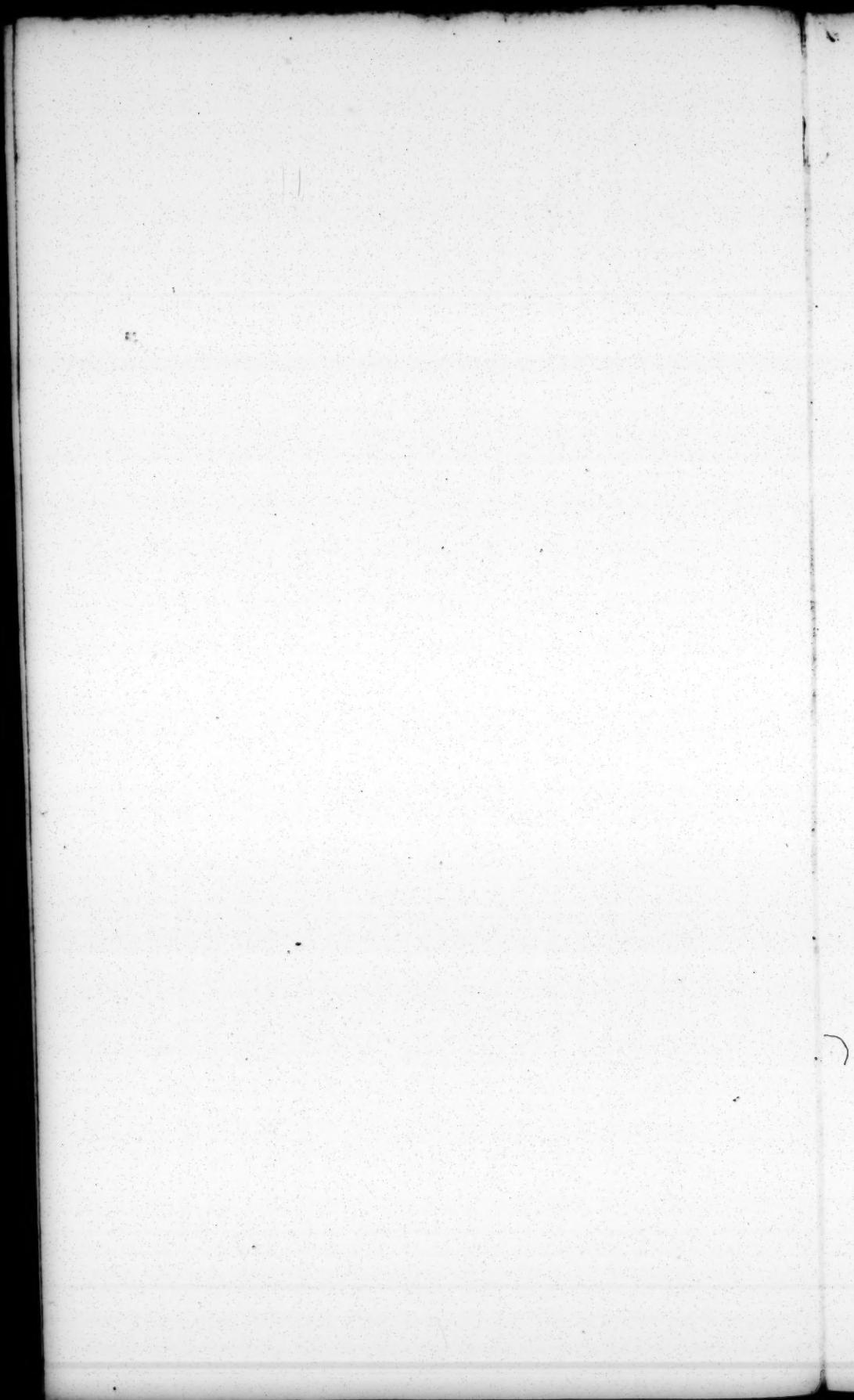


JULIA DE ROUBIGNE,

A T A L E.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

VOL. I.



Margaret Stewart 1779

JULIA DE ROUBIGNÉ,

A T A L E.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

PUBLISHED BY

The AUTHOR OF THE MAN OF FEELING,
and THE MAN OF THE WORLD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

I Have formerly taken the liberty of holding some prefatory discourse with my readers, on the subject of those little histories, which accident had enabled me to lay before them. This is probably the last time I shall make use of their indulgence; and even, if this Introduction should be found superfluous, it may claim their pardon, as the parting address of one, who has endeavoured to contribute to their entertainment.

I was favoured last summer with a visit from a gentleman, a native of France, with whose father I had been intimately acquainted when I was last in that country. I confess myself particularly de-

A 3. lighted.

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lighted with an intercourse, which removes the barrier of national distinction, and gives to the inhabitants of the world the appearance of one common family. I received, therefore, this young Frenchman into that humble shed, which Providence has allowed my age to rest in, with peculiar satisfaction, and was rewarded, for any little attention I had in my power to shew him, by acquiring the friendship of one, whom I found to inherit all that paternal worth, which had fixed my esteem, about a dozen years ago, in Paris. In truth, such attention always rewards itself; and, I believe, my own feelings, which I expressed to this amiable and accomplished Frenchman on his leaving England, are such as every one will own, whose mind is susceptible of feeling at all. He was profuse of thanks, to which my

good

good offices had no title, but from the inclination that accompanied them.—*Ici, Monsieur,* (said I, for he had used a language more accommodated than ours to the lesser order of sentiments, and I answered him, as well as long want of practice would allow me, in the same tongue) —*Ici, Monsieur, obscur & inconnu, avec beaucoup de bienveillance, mais peu de pouvoir, je ne goûte point d'un plaisir plus sincère, que de penser, qu'il y a, dans aucun quartier du monde, une ame bonnête, qui se souvient de moi avec reconnaissance.*

But I am talking of myself, when I should be giving an account of the following papers. This gentleman, discoursing with me on the subject of those letters, the substance of which I formerly published under the title of *The Man of the*

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the World, observed, that if the desire of searching into the records of private life were common, the discovery of such collections would cease to be wondered at.

“ We look (said he), for the Histories of Men, among those of high rank ; but memoirs of sentiment, and suffering, may be found in every condition.

“ My father (continued my young friend) made, since you saw him, an acquisition of that nature, by a whimsical accident. Standing one day at the door of a grocery shop, making enquiry as to the lodgings of some person of his acquaintance, a little boy passed him, with a bundle of papers in his hand, which he offered for sale to the master of the shop, for the ordinary uses of his trade ; but they differed about the price, and the boy was

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was ready to depart, when my father desired a sight of the papers, saying to the lad, with a smile, that, perhaps, he might deal with him for his book ; upon reading a sentence or two, he found a style much above that of the ordinary manuscripts of a grocery-shop, and gave the boy his price, at a venture, for the whole. When he had got home, and examined the parcel, he discovered it to consist of letters put up, for the most part, according to their dates, which he committed to me, as having, he said, better eyes, and a keener curiosity, than his. I found them to contain a story in detail, which, I believe, would interest one of your turn of thinking a good deal. If you choose to undergo the trouble of the perusal, I shall take care to have them sent over to you by the first opportunity I can find,

and

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and if you will do the Public the favour to digest them, as you did those of *Annesly* and his children."—My young Frenchman speaks the language of compliment; but I do not choose to translate any further. It is enough to say, that I received his papers some time ago, and that they are those which I have translated, and now give to the world. I had perhaps treated them as I did the letters he mentioned; but I found it a difficult task to reduce them into narrative, because they are made up of sentiment, which narrative would destroy. The only power I have exercised over them, is that of omitting letters, and passages of letters, which seem to bear no relation to the story I mean to communicate. In doing this, however, I confess I have been cautious: I love myself (and am apt therefore, from

from a common sort of weakness, to imagine that other people love) to read nature in her smallest character, and am often more apprised of the state of the mind, from very trifling, than from very important circumstances.

As, from age and situation, it is likely I shall address the Public no more, I cannot avoid taking this opportunity, of thanking it for the reception it has given, to those humble pages which I formerly introduced to its notice. Unknown, and unpatronized, I had little pretension to its favour, and little expectation of it; writing, or arranging the writings of others, was, to me, only a favourite amusement, for which a man easily finds both time and apology. One advantage I drew from it, which the humane may hear with satisfaction; I often wandered

from

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from my own woe, in tracing the tale of another's affliction, and, at this moment, every sentence I write, I am but escaping a little farther from the pressure of sorrow.

Of the merit or faults of the composition, in the volumes of which I have directed the publication, a small share only was mine; for their tendency I hold myself entirely accountable, because, had it been a bad one, I had the power of suppressing them; and from their tendency, I believe, more than any other quality belonging to them, has the indulgence of their readers arisen. For that indulgence I desire to return them my grateful acknowledgments as an editor; I shall be proud with better reason, if there is nothing to be found, in my publications, that may forfeit their esteem as a man.

JULIA DE ROUBIGNÉ,

A T A L E.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

LETTER I.

Julia de Roubigné to Maria de Roncilles.

“THE friendship of your Maria,
misfortune can never deprive you
of.”—These were the words with which
you sealed that attachment we had formed
in the blissful period of infancy. The
remembrance of those peaceful days we
passed together in the convent, is often
recalled to my mind, amidst the cares of

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the

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the present. Yet do not think me foolish enough to complain of the want of those pleasures which affluence gave us; the situation of my father's affairs is such as to exclude luxury, but it allows happiness; and, were it not for the recollection of what he once possessed, which now and then intrudes itself upon him, he could scarce form a wish that were not gratified in the retreat he has found.

You were wont to call me the little philosopher; if it be philosophy to feel no violent distress from that change which the ill-fortune of our family has made in its circumstances, I do not claim much merit from being that way a philosopher. From my earliest days I found myself unambitious of wealth or grandeur, contented with the enjoyment of sequestered life,

life, and fearful of the dangers which attend an exalted station. It is therefore more properly a weakness, than a virtue, in me, to be satisfied with my present situation.

BUT, after all, my friend, what is it we have lost? We have exchanged the life of gaiety, of tumults, of pleasure they call it, which we led in Paris, when my father was a rich man; for the pure, the peaceful, the truly happy scenes, which this place affords us, now he is a poor one. Dependence and poverty alone are suffered to complain; but they know not how often greatness is dependent, and wealth is poor. Formerly, even during the very short space of the year we were at *Belville*, it was vain to think of that

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domestic enjoyment I used to hope for in the country; we were people of too much consequence to be allowed the privilege of retirement, and except those luxurious walks I sometimes found means to take—with you, my dear, I mean—the day was as little my own, as in the midst of our winter-hurry in town.

The loss of this momentous law-suit has brought us down to the level of tranquillity. Our days are not now pre-occupied by numberless engagements, nor our time anxiously divided for a rotation of amusements; I can walk, read, or think, without the officious interruption of polite visitors; and, instead of talking eternally of others, I find time to settle accounts with myself.

Could

Could we but prevail on my father to think thus!—Alas! his mind is not formed for contracting into that narrow sphere, which his fortune has now marked out for him. He feels adversity a defeat, to which the vanquished submit, with pride in their looks, but anguish in their hearts. He is cut off from the enjoyment of his present state, while he puts himself under the cruel necessity of dissembling his regret for the loss of the former.

I can easily perceive how much my dearest mother is affected by this. I see her constantly on the watch for every word and look that may discover his feelings; and she has, too often, occasion to observe them unfavourable. She en-

B 3 deavours,

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deavours, and commonly succeeds in her endeavour, to put on the appearance of cheerfulness ; she even tries to persuade herself that she has reason to be contented ; but, alas ! an effort to be happy, is always but an increase of our uneasiness.

And what is left for your Julia to do ?
In truth, I fear, I am of little service.
My heart is too much interested in the
scene, to allow me that command over
myself, which would make me useful.
My father often remarks, that I look
grave ; I smile (foolishly I fear), and deny
it ; it is, I believe, no more than I used
to do formerly ; but we were then in a
situation that did not lead him to observe
it. He had no consciousness in himself, to
prompt the observation.

How

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How often do I wish for you, Maria, to assist me! There is something in that smile of yours (I paint it to myself at this instant) which care and sorrow are unable to withstand; besides the general effect produced by the intervention of a third person, in a society, the members of which are afraid to think of one another's thoughts.—Yet you need not answer this wish of mine; I know how impossible it is for you to come hither at present. Write to me as often as you can; you will not expect order in my letters, nor observe it in your answers; I will speak to you on paper when my heart is full, and you will answer me from the sympathy of yours.

LETTER II.

Julia to Maria.

I AM to vex my Maria with an account of trifles, and those too unpleasant ones ; but she has taught me to think, that nothing is insignificant to her, in which I am concerned, and insists on participating, at least, if she cannot alleviate, my distresses.

I am every day more and more uneasy about the chagrin which our situation seems to give my father. A little incident has just now plunged him into a fit of melancholy, which all the attention of my mother, all the attempts at gaiety which

which your poor Julia is constrained to make, cannot dissipate or overcome.

Our old servant *Le Blanc* is your acquaintance; indeed he very soon becomes acquainted with every friend and visitor of the family, his age prompting him to talk, and giving him the privilege of talking.

Le Blanc had obtained permission, a few days since, to go on a visit to his daughter, who is married to a young fellow, serving in the capacity of coachman at a gentleman's in the neighbourhood of Belville. He returned last night, and, in his usual familiar manner, gave us an account of his expedition this morning.

My father enquired after his daughter ; he gave some short answer as to her ; but I saw by his face that he was full of some other intelligence. He was standing behind my father, resting one hand on the back of his chair ; he began to rub it violently, as if he would have given the wood a polish by the friction. “ I was at Belleville, Sir,” said he. My father made no reply ; but Le Blanc had got over the difficulty of beginning, and was too much occupied by the idea of the scene, to forbear attempting the picture.

“ When I struck off the high road, said he, to go down by the Old Avenue, I thought I had lost my way ; there was not a tree to be seen. You may believe me as you please, Sir ; but, I declare, I saw the rooks, that used to build there, in

in a great flock over my head, croaking for all the world as if they had been looking for the Avenue too. Old Lasune's house, where you, Mifs, (turning to me) would frequently stop in your walks, was pulled down, except a single beam at one end, which now serves for a rubbing post to some cattle that graze there ; and your roan horse, Sir, which the marquis had of you in a present, when he purchased Belville, has been turned out to grass among the rest, it seems ; for there he was, standing under the shade of the wall ; and when I came up, the poor beast knew me, as any christian would, and came neighing up to my side as he was wont to do. I gave him a piece of bread I had put in my pocket in the morning, and he followed me for more, till I reach-

ed the very gate of the house ; I mean what was the gate, when I knew it ; for there is now a rail run across, with a small door, which *Le Sauvre* told me they call Chinese. But, after all, the marquis is seldom there to enjoy those fine things ; he lives in town, *Le Sauvre* says, eleven months in the year, and only comes down to Belville, for a few weeks, to get money to spend in Paris."

Here Le Blanc paused in his narration. I was afraid to look up to see its effect on my father ; indeed the picture which the poor fellow had, innocently, drawn, had too much affected myself.—*Lasune's* house !—My Maria remembers it ; but she knows not all the ties which its recollection has upon me.

I stole

I stole however a side-long glance at my father. He seemed affected, but disdain was mixed with his tenderness; he gathered up his features, as it were, to hide the effect of the recital. " You saw Le Sauvre then ?" said he coolly.— " Yes," answered Le Blanc ; " but he is wonderfully altered since he was in your service, Sir ; when I first discovered him, he was in the garden, picking some greens for his dinner ; he looked so rueful when he lifted up his head and saw me ! indeed I was little better myself, when I cast my eyes around. It was a sad sight to see ! for the marquis keeps no gardener, except Le Sauvre himself, who has fifty things to do besides, and only hires another hand or two, for the time he resides at Belville in the summer. The walks that used to be trimmed so nicely, are

covered with mole-hills ; the hedges are full of great holes, and Le Sauvre's chickens were basking in the flower-beds. He took me into the house, and his wife seemed glad to see her old acquaintance, and the children clambered up to kiss me, and Jeanot asked me about his godmother, meaning you, Madam, and his little sister enquired after her handsome mistress, as she used to call you, Miss. "I have got, said Nanette, two new mistresses, that are finer dressed than she, but they are much prouder, and not half so pretty ;" meaning two of the marquis's daughters, who were at Belville for a few days, when their father was last there. I smiled to hear the girl talk so, though heaven knows, my heart was sad. Only three of the rooms are furnished, in one of which Le Sauvre and his family were sitting ;

sitting; the rest had their windows darkened with cobwebs, and they echoed so when Le Sauvre and I walked through them, that I shuddered, as if I had been in a monument."

"It is enough, Le Blanc," said my mother, in a sort of whisper. My father asked some indifferent question about the weather. I sat, I know not how, looking piteously, I suppose; for my mother tapped my cheek with the word Child! emphatically pronounced. I started out of my reverie, and finding myself unable to feign a composure which I did not feel, walked out of the room to hide my emotion. When I got to my own chamber, I felt the full force of Le Blanc's description, but to me it was not painful; it is not on hearts that yield the soonest

soonest that sorrow has the most powerful effects ; it was but giving way to a shower of tears, and I could think of Belville with pleasure, even in the possession of another.—They may cut its trees, Maria, and alter its walks, but cannot so deface it as to leave no traces for the memory of your Julia! — Methinks I should hate to have been born in a town ; when I say my native brook, or my native hill, I talk of friends of whom the remembrance warms my heart. To me, even to me, who have lost their acquaintance, there is something delightful in the melancholy recollection of their beauties ; and, here, I often wander out to the top of a little broom-covered knoll, merely to look towards the quarter where Belville is situated.

It

It is otherwise with my father. On Le Blanc's recital he has brooded these three days. The effect it had on him is still visible in his countenance, and but an hour ago, while my mother and I were talking of some other subject, in which he was joining by monosyllables, he said, all at once, that he had some thoughts of sending to the marquis for his roan horse again, since he did not chuse to keep him properly.

They who have never known prosperity, can hardly be said to be unhappy ; it is from the remembrance of joys we have lost, that the arrows of affliction are pointed. Must we then tremble, my friend, in the possession of present pleasures, from the fear of their embittering futurity ? or does Heaven thus teach us
that

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that sort of enjoyment, of which the remembrance is immortal? Does it point out those as the happy who can look back on their past life, not as the chronicle of pleasure, but as the record of virtue?

Forgive my preaching; I have leisure, and cause to preach. You know how faithfully, in every situation,

I am yours.

LETTER III.

Julia to Maria.

"I Will speak to you on paper when my heart is full."—Misfortune thinks itself entitled to speak, and feels some consolation in the privilege of complaining, even where it has nothing to hope from the utterance of complaint.

Is it a want of duty in me to mention the weakness of a parent? Heaven knows the sincerity of the love I bear him! Were I indifferent about my father, the state of his mind would not much disquiet me; but my anxiety for his happiness carries me perhaps a blameable length,

length, in that censure, which I cannot help feeling, of his incapacity to enjoy it.

My mother too ! if he knew how much it preys upon her gentle soul, to see the impatience with which he suffers adversity?—Yet, alas ! unthinking creature that I am, I judge of his mind by my own, and while I venture to blame his distress, I forget that it is entitled to my pity.

This morning he was obliged to go to the neighbouring village, to meet a procureur from Paris on some business, which he told us would detain him all day. The night was cold and stormy, and my mother and I looked often earnestly out, thinking on the disagreeable ride he would have on his return. “ My poor husband !” said my mother, as the wind howled

howled in the lobby beneath. " But I have heard him say, Mamma, that, in these little hardships, a man thinks himself unfortunate, but is never unhappy ; and you may remember he would always prefer riding, to being drove in a carriage, because of the enjoyment which he told us he should feel from a clean room and a cheering fire when he got home." At the word Carriage, I could observe my mother sigh ; I was sorry it had escaped me ; but, at the end of my speech, we looked both of us at the hearth, which I had swept but the moment before ; the faggots were crackling in the fire, and my little Fidele lay asleep before it.— He pricked up his ears and barked, and we heard the trampling of horses in the court. Your father is returned, cried my mother ; and I ran to the door to receive him.

him. “Julia, is it not?” said he (for the servant had not time to fetch us a light); but he said it coldly. I offered to help him off with his surtout. “Softly, child, said he, you pull my arm awry.” It was a trifle, but I felt my heart swell when he said this.

He entered the room; my mother took his hand in hers. “You are terribly cold, my love,” said she, and she drew his chair nearer to the fire; he threw aside his hat and whip, without speaking a word. In the centre of the table, which was covered for supper, I had placed a bowl of milk, dressed in a way I knew he liked, and had garnished it with some artificial flowers, in the manner we used to have our deserts done at Belville. He fixed his eyes on it, and I began to make ready

ready my answer to a question I supposed he would ask, who had trimmed it so nicely? but he started hastily from his chair, and snatching up this little piece of ornament, threw it into the fire, saying, "we had now no title to finery." This was too much for me; it was foolish, very foolish, but I could not help letting fall some tears. He looked sternly at me, and, muttering some words which I could not hear, walked out of the room, and slapped the door roughly behind him. I threw myself on my mother's neck, and wept outright.

Our supper was silent and sullen; to me the more painful, from the mortifying reverse which I felt from what I had expected. My father did not taste the milk; my mother asked him to eat of it with

with an affected ease in her manner; but I observed her voice falter as she asked him: As for me, I durst not look him in the face; I trembled every time the servant left the room; there was a protection, even in his presence, which I could not bear to lose. The table was scarcely uncovered, when my father said he was tired and sleepy; my mother laid hold of the opportunity, and offered to accompany him to their chamber: She bid me good night; my father was silent; but I answered as if addressing myself to both.

Maria! in my hours of visionary indulgence, I have sometimes painted to myself a husband—no matter whom—comforting me amidst the distresses which fortune had laid upon us. I have smiled upon him through my tears; tears, not
of

of anguish, but of tenderness;—our children were playing around us, unconscious of misfortune; we had taught them to be humble and to be happy;—our little shed was reserved to us, and their smiles to cheer it.—I have imagined the luxury of such a scene, and affliction became a part of my dream of happiness!

Thus far I had written last night; I found at last my body tired and drowsy, though my mind was ill disposed to obey it: I laid aside my pen, and thought of going to bed; but I continued sitting in my chair, for an hour after, in that state of languid thinking, which, though it has not strength enough to fasten on any single object, can wander without weariness.

ness over a thousand. The clock striking one, dissolved the enchantment; I was then with my Maria, and went I to bed but to continue my dream of her.

Why did I wake to anxiety and disquiet?—Selfish! that I should not bear without murmuring, my proportion of both!—I met my mother in the parlour, with a smile of meekness and serenity on her countenance; she did not say a single word of last night's incident; and I saw she purposely avoided giving me any opportunity of mentioning it; such is the delicacy of her conduct with regard to my father. What an angel this woman is! Yet I fear, my friend, she is a very woman in her sufferings.

She

She was the only speaker of our company, while my father sat with us. He rode out soon after breakfast, and did not return till dinner-time. I was almost afraid of his return, and was happy to see, from my window, somebody riding down the lane along with him. This was a gentleman of considerable rank and fortune in our neighbourhood, the count *Louis de Montauban*. I do not know how it has happened, but I cannot recollect having ever mentioned him to you before. He is not one of those very interesting characters, which are long present with the mind; yet his worth is universally acknowledged, and his friendship to my father, though of late acquisition, deserves more than ordinary acknowledgment from us. His history we heard from others, soon after our arrival here; since

our acquaintance began, we have had it, at different times, from himself; for though he has not much frankness about him to discover his secrets, he possesses a manly firmness, which does not shrink from the discovery.

His father was only brother to the late Francis count de Montauban; his mother, the daughter of a noble family in Spain, died in childbed of him, and he was soon after deprived of his remaining parent, who was killed at a siege in Flanders. His uncle took, for some time, the charge of his education; but, before he attained the age of manhood, he discovered, in the count's behaviour, a want of that respect which should have distinguished the relation from the dependent; and after having, in vain, endeavoured to assert

assert it, he took the resolution of leaving France, and travelled a-foot into Spain, where he met with a very kind reception from the relations of his mother. By their assistance, he was afterwards enabled to acquire a respectable rank in the Spanish army, and served, in a series of campaigns, with distinguished reputation. About a year ago, his uncle died unmarried; by this event he succeeded to the family estate, part of which is situated in this neighbourhood; and since that time, he has been generally here, employed in superintending it; for which, it seems, there was the greater necessity, as the late count, who commonly lived at the old hereditary seat of his ancestors, had, for some of the last years of his life, been entirely under the dominion of rapacious domestics, and suffered his af-

fairs in this quarter, to run under their guidance, into the greatest confusion.

Though, in France, a man of fortune's residence at his country-seat is so unusual, that it might be supposed to enhance the value of such a neighbour, yet the circumstance of Montauban's great fortune was a reason, I believe, for my father shunning any advances towards his acquaintance. The count at last contrived to introduce himself to us (which, for what reason I know not, he seemed extremely anxious to do), in a manner that flattered my father; not by offering favours, but by asking one. He had led a walk through a particular part of his ground, along the course of a brook, which runs also through a narrow neck of my father's property, by the intervention of which,

which, the count's territory was divided. This stripe of my father's ground would have been a purchase very convenient for Montauban; but, with that peculiar delicacy which our situation required, he never made the proposition of a purchase, but only requested that he might have leave to open a passage through an old wall, by which it was inclosed, that he might enjoy a continuation of that romantic path, which the banks of the rivulet afforded. His desire was expressed so politely, that it could not be refused. Montauban soon after paid a visit of thanks to my father, on the occasion; this last was pleased with an incident, which gave him back the power of conferring an obligation, and therefore, I presume, looked on his new acquaintance with a favourable eye; he praised his ap-

C 4 pearance,

pearance, to my mother and me; and since that day, they have improved their acquaintance into a very cordial intimacy.

In many respects, indeed, their sentiments are congenial. A high sense of honour is equally the portion of both. Montauban, from his long service in the army, and his long residence in Spain, carries it to a very romantic height. My father, from a sense of his situation, is now more jealous than ever of his. Montauban seems of a melancholy disposition. My father was far from being so once; but misfortune has now given his mind a tincture of sadness. Montauban thinks lightly of the world, from principle. My father, from ill-usage, holds it in disgust. This last similarity of sentiment is a favourite topic of their discourse, and their friend-

friendship seems to increase, from every mutual observation which they make. Perhaps it is from something amiss in our nature, but I have often observed the most strict of our attachments to proceed from an alliance of dislike.

There is something hard and unbending in the character of the count, which, though my father applauds it under the title of magnanimity, I own myself womanish enough not to like. There is an yielding weakness, which to me is more amiable than the inflexible right; it is an act of my reason to approve of the last; but my heart gives its suffrage to the first, without pausing to inquire for a cause.—I am awkward at defining; you know what I mean; the last is stern

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in Montauban, the first is smiling in
Maria.

Mean time, I wish to feel the most perfect gratitude for his unwearied assiduities to oblige my father and his family. When I think on his uncommon friendship, I try to forget that severity, which holds me somehow at a distance from him.

Though I meant a description, I have scrawled through most of my paper without beginning one. I have made but some slight sketches of his mind; of his person I have said nothing, which, from a woman to a woman, should have been mentioned the soonest. It is such as becomes a soldier, rather manly than handsome, with an air of dignity in his mien
that

that borders on haughtiness. In short, were I to study for a sentence, I should say, that Montauban was made to command respect from all, to obtain praise from most, but to engage the affections of few.

His company to-day was of importance to us. By ourselves, every one's look seemed the spy on another's. We were conscious of remembering what all affected to forget. Montauban's conversation reconciled us, without our being sensible of it.

My father, who (as it commonly happens to the aggressor in those cases) had perhaps felt more from his own harshness, than either my mother or I, seemed happy to find an opportunity of being re-

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storied to his former familiarity. He was gayer, and more in spirits, than I have seen him for a long time past. He insisted on the count's spending the evening with us. Montauban at first excused himself. He had told us, in the course of conversation, of his having appropriated the evening to business at home; but my father would listen to no apology, and the other was at last overcome. He seems, indeed, to feel an uncommon attachment to my father, and to enjoy more pleasure in his company, than I should have expected him to find in the society of any one.

You are now, in the account of correspondence, I do not know how deep, in my debt. I mean not to ask regular returns; but write to me, I intreat you, when

when you can ; and write larger letters than your last. Put down every thing, so it be what you feel at the time ; and tell every incident that can make me present with you, were it but the making up of a cap that pleases you. You see how much paper I contrive to blot with trifles.

LETTER IV.

Montauban to Segarva.

YOU saw, my friend, with what reluctance I left Spain, though it was to return to the country of my birth, to the inheritance of my fathers. I trembled when I thought what a scene of confusion the strange mismanagement of my uncle had left me to disentangle; but it required only a certain degree of fortitude to begin that business, and it was much sooner concluded than I looked for. I have now almost wrought myself out of work, and yet the situation is not so disgusting as I imagined. I have long learned to despise that flippancy, which characterises

terises my countrymen ; yet, I know not how it is, they gain upon me in spite of myself ; and while I resolve to censure, I am forced to smile.

From Paris, however, I fled, as if it had been infested with a pestilence. Great towns certainly contain many excellent persons ; but vice and folly predominate so much, that a search after their opposites is beyond the limits of ordinary endurance ; and, besides the superiority of numbers, the first are ever perked up to view, while the latter are solicitous to avoid observation.

In the country I found a different style of character. Here are impertinents who talk nonsense, and rogues who cheat where they can ; but they are somewhat nearer

nearer nature in both. I met with some female relations, who stunned me with receipts in cookery, and prescriptions in physic; but they did not dictate to my taste in letters, or my judgment in philosophy. Ignorance I can bear without emotion; but the affectation of learning gives me a fit of the spleen.

I make indeed but an awkward figure among them; for I am forced, by representing my uncle, to see a number of our family friends, whom I never heard of. These good people, however, bear with me wonderfully, and I am not laughed at, as you predicted.

But they sometimes pester me with their civilities. It is their principle, that a man cannot be happy alone; and they tire

tire me with their company, out of pure good-nature. I have endeavoured to undeceive them: the greater part do not understand my hints; those who do, represent me a sour ungracious being, whom Spain has taught pride and sullenness. This is well, and I hope the opinion will propagate itself apace. One must be somewhat hated, to be independent of folly.

There is but one of my neighbours, whose temper I find at all congenial to my own. He has been taught by Misfortune to be serious: for that I love him; but Misfortune has not taught him to be humble: for this I love him the more. There is a pride which becomes every man; a poor man, of all others, should possess it.

His

His name is *Pierre de Roubigné*. His family of that rank, which is perhaps always necessary to give a fixed liberality of sentiment. From the consequences of an unfortunate law-suit, his circumstances became so involved, that he was obliged to sell his paternal estate, and retire to a small purchase he had made in this province, which is situated in the midst of my territories here. My steward pointed it out to me, as a thing it was proper for me to be master of, and hinted, that its owner's circumstances were such as might induce him to part with it. Such is the language of those devourers of land, who wish to make a wilderness around them, provided they are lords of it. For my part, I find much less pleasure in being the master of acres, than the friend of men.

From

From the particulars of Mons. de Roubigné's story, which I learned soon after I came hither, I was extremely solicitous of his acquaintance; but I found it not easy to accomplish my desire, the distance which great minds preserve in adversity, keeping him secluded from the world. By humouring that delicacy, which ruled him in his acceptance of a new acquaintance, I have at last succeeded. He admits me as his guest, without the ceremony which the little folks around us oblige me to endure from them. He does not think himself under the necessity of eternally talking to entertain me; and we sometimes spend a morning together, pleased with each other's society, though we do not utter a dozen sentences.

His

His youth has been enlightened by letters, and informed by travel; but what is still more valuable, his mind has been early impressed with the principles of manly virtue: he is liberal in sentiment, but rigid in the feelings of honour.

Were I to mark his failings, I might observe a degree of peevishness at mankind, which, though mankind may deserve, it is the truest independence not to allow them. He feels that chagrin at his situation, which constitutes the victory of Misfortune over us—but I have not known Misfortune, and am therefore not entitled to observe it.

His family consists of a wife and daughter, his only surviving child, who are equally estimable with himself. I have
not,

not, at present, time to describe them. I have given you this sketch of him, because I think he is such a man as might be the friend of my Segarva. There are so few in this trifling world, whose mutual excellence deserves mutual esteem, that the intervention of an hundred leagues should not bar their acquaintance; and we increase the sense of virtue in ourselves, by the consciousness of virtue in others.

LETTER V.

Montauban to Segarva.

I Described to you, in my last, the father of that family, whose acquaintance I have chiefly cultivated since I came hither. His wife and daughter I promised to describe—at least such a promise was implied—perhaps I find pleasure in describing them—I have time enough at least for the description—but no matter for the cause.

Madame de Roubigné has still the remains of a fine woman; and, if I may credit a picture in her husband's possession, was in her youth remarkably handsome.

some. She has now a sort of stillness in her look, which seems the effect of resignation in adversity. Her countenance bears the marks of a sorrow, which we do not so much pity as revere; she has yielded to calamity, while her husband has struggled under its pressure, and hence has acquired a composure, which renders that uneasiness I remarked in him more observable by the contrast. I have been informed of one particular, which, besides the difference of sex, may, in a great measure, account for this. She brought Roubigné a very considerable fortune, the greatest part of which was spent in that unfortunate law-suit I mentioned. A consciousness of this makes the husband impatient under their present circumstances, from the very principle of gene-

generosity, which leads the wife to appear contented.

In her conversation she is guided by the same evenness of temper. She talks of the world as of a scene where she is a spectator merely, in which there is something for virtue to praise, for charity to pardon; and smooths the spleen of her husband's observations by some palliative remark which experience has taught her.

One consolation she has ever at hand: *Religion*, the friend of Calamity, she had cultivated in her most prosperous days. Affliction, however, has not driven her to enthusiasm; her feelings of devotion are mild and secret, her expression gentle and charitable. I have always observed your outrageously religious, amidst their severity

severity to their neighbours, manifest a discontent with themselves; spirits like Madame de Roubigné's have that inward peace which is easily satisfied with others. The rapturous blaze of devotion is more allied to vanity than to happiness; like the torch of the great, it distresses its owner, while it flames in the eye of the public; the other, like the rush-light of the cottager, cheers the little family within, while it seeks not to be seen of the world.

But her daughter, her lovely daughter!—with all the gentleness of her mother's disposition, she unites the warmth of her father's heart, and the strength of her father's understanding. Her eyes, in their silent state (if I may use the term), give the beholder every idea of

50 JULIA DE ROUBIGNE'.

feminine softness ; when sentiment or feeling animates them, how eloquent they are ! When Roubigné talks, I hate vice, and despise folly ; when his wife speaks, I pity both ; but the music of Julia's tongue gives the throb of virtue to my heart, and lifts my soul to somewhat superhuman.

I mention not the graces of her form ; yet they are such as would attract the admiration of those, by whom the beauties of her mind might not be understood. In one as well as the other, there is a remarkable conjunction of tenderness with dignity ; but her beauty is of that sort, on which we cannot properly decide independent of the soul, because the first is never uniaformed by the latter.

Te

To the flippancy, which we are apt to ascribe to females of her age, she seems utterly a stranger. Her disposition indeed appears to lean, in an uncommon degree, towards the serious. Yet she breaks forth at times into filial attempts at gaiety, to amuse that disquiet which she observes in her father; but even then it looks like a conquest over the natural pensiveness of her mind. This melancholy might be held a fault in Julia; but the fortune of her family has been such, that none but those, who are totally exempted from thinking, could have looked on it with indifference.

It is only indeed, when she would confer happiness on others, that she seems perfectly to enjoy it. The rustics around us talk of her affability and good-hu-

mour with the liveliest gratitude ; and I have been witness to several scenes, where she dispensed mirth and gaiety to some poor families in our neighbourhood, with a countenance as cheerful as the most unthinking of them all. At those seasons I have been tempted from the gravity natural to me, and borrowed from trifles a temporary happiness. Had you seen me yesterday dancing in the midst of a band of grape-gatherers, you would have blushed for your friend ; but I danced with Julia.

I am called from my description by the approach of her whom I would describe. Her father has sent his servant to inform me, that his wife and daughter have agreed to accompany him in a walk, as far as to a farm of mine, where I have set

set about trying some experiments in agriculture. Roubigné is skilful in those things : as for me, I know I shall lose money by them ; but it will not be lost to the public : and if I can even shew what will not succeed, I shall do something for the good of my neighbours. Methinks too, if Julia de Roubigné would promise to come and look at them.—But I see their family from my window. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

Julia to Maria.

YOU rally me on the subject of the count de Montauban, with that vivacity which I have so often envied you the possession of. You say, you are sure, you should like him vastly. "What a blessing, in a remote province, where one is in danger of dying of *ennui*, to have this stiff, crusty, honourable Spaniard, to tease and make a fool of!" I have no thoughts of such amusement, and therefore I do not like him vastly; but, I confess, I begin to like him better than I did. He has lost much of that sternness (dignity, my father calls it), which used

used to chill me when I approached him. He can talk of common things in a common way ; and but yesterday he danced with me on the green, amidst a troop of honest rustics, whom I wished to make happy at the small expence of sharing their happiness. All this, I allow, at first, seemed foreign to the man ; but he did not, as I have seen some of your wife people do, take great credit for letting himself down so low. He did it with a design of frankness, though some of his native loftiness remained in the execution.

We are much in his debt on the score of domestic happiness. He has become so far one of the family as to be welcome at all times, a privilege he makes very frequent use of ; and we find ourselves

so much at ease with him, that we never think even of talking more than we chuse, to entertain him. He will sit for an hour at the table where I am working, with no other amusement than that of twisting shreds of my catgut into whimsical figures.

I think that he also is not the worse for our society; I suppose him the happier for it, from the change in his sentiments of others. He often disputes with my father, and will not allow the world to be altogether so bad as he used to do. My father, who can now be merry at times, jokes him on his apostacy. He appealed to me this morning for the truth of his argument. I told him, I was unable to judge, because I knew nothing of the world. " And yet,

yet, (replied he gallantly) it is from you one should learn to think better of it : I never knew, till I came hither, that it contained any thing so valuable as Mademoiselle de Roubigné." I think, he looked foolish when he paid me this compliment. I curtseyed, with composure enough. It is not from men like Montauban that one blushes at a compliment.

Besides the general addition to our good-humour, his society is particularly useful to me. His discourse frequently turns on subjects, from the discussion of which, though I am somewhat afraid to engage in it, I always find myself the wiser. Amidst the toils of his military life, Montauban has contrived to find leisure for the pursuit of very extensive

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and useful knowledge. This, though little solicitous to display, he is always ready to communicate ; and, as he finds me willing to be instructed, he seems to find a pleasure in instructing me.

My mother takes every opportunity of encouraging this sort of conversation. You have often heard her sentiments on the mutual advantage of such intercourse between the sexes. You will remember her frequent mention of a male friend, who died soon after her marriage, from whom, she has told us, she derived most of the little accomplishment her mind can boast of. " Men (she used to say) though they talk much of their friends, are seldom blest with a friend. The nature of that companionship, which they mistake for friendship, is really destructive of its

existence; because the delicacy of the last shrinks from the rude touch of the former; and that, however pure in their own sentiments, the society which they see each other hold with third persons, is too gross, not to break those tender links, which are absolutely essential to friendship. Girls (she said) easily form a connexion of a more refined sort; but as it commonly begins with romance, it seldom outlasts the years of childhood, except when it degenerates into cabal and intrigue; but that the friendship of one of each sex, when so circumstanced as to be distant from love (which she affirmed might be the case), has that combination of strength and delicacy which is equally formed to improve and delight."

60 JULIA DE ROUBIGNE.

There may be much reason in her arguments ; but I cannot, notwithstanding my esteem for him, easily think of Montauban as my friend. He has not yet quite obliterated the fears I felt on our first acquaintance. He has, however, done much to conquer them ; and, if he goes on as he has begun, I know not what in time he may arrive at. Mean time I am contented with Maria : our friendship has at least endured beyond the period assigned by my mother. Shall it not always endure ? I know the answer which your heart will make—mine throbs while I think of it.

LETTER VII.

Montauban to Segarva.

YOU complain of my silence. In truth I have nothing to say but to repeat, what is very unnecessary, my assurances of friendship to Segarva. My life is of a sort that produces nothing ; I mean in recital. To myself it is not vacant : I can be employed in marking the growth of a shrub ; but I cannot describe its progress, nor even tell why its progress pleases me.

If the word society is confined to our own species, I enjoy very little of it. I should except that of the family I gave you

you an account of some time ago. I fear I am too often with them ; I frequently resolve to be busy at home ; but I have scarce sat down to my table, when the picture of Roubigné's parlour presents itself, and I think that my business may wait till to-morrow.

I blush to tell you what a fool I am grown ; or is it that I am nearer the truth than formerly ? I begin to entertain doubts of my own dignity, and to think that man is not altogether formed for the sublime place I used to allot him. One can be very happy with much less trouble, than very wise : I have discovered this at Roubigné's. It is but conquering **the** name of trifles, which our pride would give things, and my hours at Roubigné's are

are as importantly filled up as any employment could make them.

After all, what is our boasted philosophy to ourselves or others? Its consequence is often borrowed, more from the language it speaks, than the object it pursues, and its attainments valued, more from their difficulty, than their usefulness. But life takes its complexion from inferior things; and providence has wisely placed its real blessings within the reach of moderate abilities. We look for a station beyond them; it is fit that we too should have our reward; and it is found in our vanity. It is only from this cause, that I sometimes blush, as if I were unworthily employed, when I feel myself happy in doing nothing at Mons. de Roubigné's fire-side.

Yet

Yet do not suppose that we are always employed in talking of trifles : She has a mind no less capable of important research, of exalted sentiment.—

I am hastily called away ;—it saves you the continuation of a very dull letter. I send this, such as it is, more as a title to receive one from you, than that it should stand for any thing of itself.

Farewel.

LETTER VIII.

Julia to Maria.

PITY me, Maria, pity me ! even that quiet which my letters of late described, which I was contented to call happiness, is denied me. There is a fatality which every-where attends the family of the unfortunate Roubigné ; here, to the abodes of peace, perplexity pursues it ; and it is destined to find new distress, from those scanty sources to which it looked for comfort.

The count de Montauban—why did he see me ? why did he visit here ? why did I listen to his discourse ? though, Hea-

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ven knows, I meant not to deceive him ! —He has declared himself the lover of your Julia!—I own his virtues, I esteem his character, I know the gratitude too we owe him; from all those circumstances I am doubly distressed at my situation; but it is impossible, it is impossible that I should love him. How could he imagine that I should ? or how does he still continue to imagine that I may be won to love him? I softened my refusal, because I would distress no man; Montauban of all men the least; but surely it was determined enough, to cut off all hopes of my ever altering my resolution.

Should not his pride teach him to cease such mortifying solicitations ? How has it, in this instance alone, forsaken him ? Methinks too he has acted ungenerously, in
letting

letting my mother know of his addresses. When I hinted this, he fell at my feet, and intreated me to forgive a passion so earnest as his, for calling in every possible assistance. Cruel ! that in this tenderest concern, that sex which is naturally feeble, should have other weaknesses to combat besides its own.

I know my mother's gentleness too well to have much to fear from her ; but the idea of my father's displeasure is terrible. This morning, when I intreated my mother not to mention this matter to him, she informed me of her having already told him. It was an affair, she said, of so much importance to his family, that she durst not venture to conceal it. There was something in the coolness of her words that hurt me ; but I stifled

stifled the answer which I was about to make, and only observed, that of that family I was the nearest concerned. " You shall judge for yourself, my dear girl, (said she, resuming the natural gentleness of her manner) I will never pretend to controul your affections. Your opinions I always hold it my duty to guide ; experience, dearly bought perhaps, has given me some title to guide them. Believe me, there are dreams of romantic affection, which are apt to possess young minds, the reality of which is not to be found in nature. I do not blame you for doubting this at present ; but the time will come when you shall be convinced of its truth."

Is it so Maria ? Shall that period ever arrive, when my present feelings shall

be

be forgotten? But, if it should, are they not now my conscience, and should I not be unjust to Montauban and myself, were I now to act against them?

I have seen my father. He came into my room in his usual way, and asked me, if I chose to walk with him. His words were the same they were wont to be; but I could discover that his thoughts were different. He looked on me with a determined countenance, as if he prepared himself for contradiction. I concealed my uneasiness, however, and attended him with that appearance of cheerfulness, which I make it a point of duty to wear in his presence. He seemed to have expected something different; for I saw he was softened from that hostility, may

I call

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I call it, of aspect, which he had assumed at first, and, during our walk, he expressed himself to me with unusual tenderness. Alas ! too much so, Maria ! Why am I obliged to offend him ? When he called me the support and solace of his age; when he blessed Heaven for leaving him, in the worst of his misfortunes, his Julia to comfort him—why could I not then, amidst my filial tears, when my heart should have poured itself out in duty and gratitude, why could I not then assure him of its obedience ?

Write to me, for pity's sake, write to me speedily——Assist me, counsel me, guide me—but say not that I should listen to Montauban,

LETTER IX.

Montauban to Segarva.

I sit down to write to Segarva, with the idea of his presence at the time, and the idea was wont to be a pleasant one; it is now mixed with a sort of uneasiness, like that which a man feels, who has offended, and would ask to be forgiven. The consciousness of what I mean by this letter to reveal, hangs like guilt upon my mind; therefore it is that I have so long delayed writing. If you shall think it weakness.—Yet I know not how I can bear chiding on this point.

But why should I doubt of your approving it. Our conversations on the

sex

sex might be just, but they touch not Julia de Roubigné. Could my friend but see, but know her, I should need no other advocate to excuse the change of my sentiments.

Let me tell him then of my passion for that loveliest of women; that it has prompted me to offer her a hand, which, he has sometimes heard me declare, should never give away my freedom. This sounded like something manly, but it was, in truth, a littleness of soul. He who pauses in the exercise of every better affection of the heart, till he calculates the chances of danger or of ridicule, is the veriest of cowards; but the resolution, though frequently made, is seldom or never adhered to; the voice

of nature, of wisdom, and of virtue is against it.

To acquire such a friend as Julia de Roubigné—but friend is a word insignificant of the connexion—to have one soul, one fate with her! to participate her happiness, to share her griefs! to be that single Being to whom, the next to Divinity, she pours out the feelings of her heart, to whom she speaks the gentlest of her wishes, to whom she sighs the most delicate of her fears! to grant those wishes, to sooth those fears! to have such a woman (like our guardian-angel without his superiority) to whom we may unbosom our own!—the creation of pleasures is little; this is a creation of soul to enjoy them!

Call not mine the language of doating love ; I am confident how much reason is on my side, and will now hear Segarva with patience.

He will tell me of that fascinating power which women possess, when they would win us, which fades at once from the character of wife.—But I know Julia de Roubigné well ; she has grown up under the eye of the best of parents, unschooled in the practices of her sex ; she is ignorant of those arts of delusion, which are taught by the society of women of the world. I have had opportunities of seeing her at all seasons, and in every attitude of mind.—Her soul is too gentle for the touch of art ; an effort at deceit would bring it even to torture.

He will remind me of the disparity of age, and tell me of the danger of her affections wandering from one, whom, on comparison with herself, she will learn to think an old man.—But Julia is of an order of beings superior to those whom external form, and the trifling language of gallantry, can attract. Had she the flippancy of mind which those shallow qualities are able to allure, I think, Segarva, she were beneath the election of Montauban.

I remember our former conversations on the subject of marriage, when we were both of one side; and that, then, you observed in me a certain wakeful jealousy of honour, which, you said, the smile of a wife on another man would rouse into

E 2 *disquiet.*

disquiet.—Perhaps I have been sometimes too hasty that way, in the sense of affronts from men; but the nicety of a soldier's character, which must ever be out of the reach of question, may excuse it. I think I never shewed suspicion of my friends; and why to this lovely one, the delicacy of whose virtue I would vouch against the world, should I be more unjust than to others?—There is no fiend so malicious, as to breathe detraction against my Julia.

In short, I have canvassed all your objections, and, I think, I have answered them all. Forgive me for supposing you to make them; and forgive me, when I tell you, that, while I did so, methought I loved you less than I was wont to do.

But

But I am anticipating blessings, which may never arrive; for the gentlest of her sex is yet cruel to Montauban. But, I trust, it is only the maiden coyness of a mind, naturally fearful. She owned her esteem, her friendship; these are poor to the returns I ask: but they must be exchanged for sentiments more tender, they must yield to the ardour of mine. They must, they shall: I feel my heart expand with a glad foreboding, that tells it of happiness to come. While I enjoy it, I wish for something more: let me hear then that my Savedra enjoys it too.

LETTER X.

Julia to Maria.

YOU know not the heart of your Julia; yet impute it not to a want of confidence in your friendship. Its perplexity is of a nature so delicate, that I am sometimes afraid even to think on it myself; and often, when I meant to reveal it to you, my utterance failed in the attempt.

The character you have heard of the count de Montauban is just; it is perhaps even less than he merits; for his virtues are of that unbending kind, that does not easily stoop to the opinion of the world;

world; to which the world therefore is not profuse of its eulogium. I revere his virtues, I esteem his good qualities; but I cannot love him.—This must be my answer to others: But Maria has a right to something more; she may be told my weakness, for her friendship can pity and support it.

Learn then that I have not a heart to bestow.—I blush even while I write this confession.—Yet to love merit like *Savillon's*, cannot be criminal.—Why then do I blush again, when I think of revealing it?

You have seen him at Belville; alas! you know not his worth; it is not easy to know it. Gentle, modest, retired from notice,—it was the lot of your Julia to discover

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it. She prized it the more, that it was not common to all; and while she looked on it as the child of her own observation, it was vanity to know, it was virtue to cherish.—Alas! she was unconscious of that period, when it ceased to be virtue and grew into passion!

But whither am I wandering? I meant only to relate; but our feelings speak for themselves, before we can tell why we feel.

Savillon's father and mine were friends; his father was unfortunate, and mine was the friend of his misfortunes; hence arose a sort of dependence on the one side, which, on the other, I fear, was never entirely forgotten. I have sometimes observed this weakness in my father;

ther; but the pride that leads to virtue may be pardoned. He thinks of a man as his inferior, only that he may do him a kindness more freely. Savillon's family, indeed, was not so noble as his mind; my father warmly acknowledged the excellency of the last; but he had been taught, from earliest infancy, to consider a misfortune the want of the former.

After the death of old Savillon, my father's friendship and protection were transferred to his son; the time he could spare from study, was commonly spent at Belville. He appeared to feel in his situation that dependence I mentioned; in mean souls, this produces servility; in liberal minds, it is the nurse of honourable pride. There was a silent melancholy about Savillon, which disdained the no-

tice of superficial observers, and was never satisfied with superficial acquirement. His endowments did not attract the eye of the world ; but they fixed the esteem and admiration of his friends. His friends indeed were few ; and he seemed not to wish them many.

To know such a man ; to see his merit ; to regret that yoke which Fortune had laid upon him—I am bewildered in sentiment again.—In truth, my story is the story of sentiment. I would tell you how I began to love Savillon ; but the trifles, by which I now mark the progress of this attachment, are too little for description.

We were frequently together, at that time of life when a boy and girl are not alarmed

alarmed at being together. Savillon's superior attainments made him a sort of master for your Julia. He used to teach me ideas ; sometimes he flattered me, by saying that, in his turn, he learned from me. Our feelings were often equally disgusted with many of the common notions of mankind, and we early began to form a league against them. We began with an alliance of argument ; but the heart was always appealed to in the last resort.

The time at last came, when I began to fear something improper in our friendship ; but the fears that should guard, betray us. They make pictures to our fancy, which the reason they call to their assistance cannot overcome. In my rambles through the woods at Belville, I

have often turned into a different walk from that I first designed to take, because I suspected Savillon was there!— Alas! Maria, an ideal Savillon attended me, more dangerous than the real.

But it was only from his absence I acquired a certain knowledge of myself. I remember, on the eve of his departure, we were walking in the garden; my father was with us. He had been commending some carnation seeds, which he had just received from an eminent florist at Versailles. Savillon was examining some of them, which my father had put into his hand; and soon after, when we came to a small plot, which I used to call my garden, he sowed a few of them in a particular corner of it. I took little notice at the time; but not long after he

was gone, the flowers began to appear. You cannot easily imagine the effect this trifling circumstance had upon me. I used to visit the spot by stealth, for a certain conscious feeling prevented my going openly thither, and watched the growth of those carnations with the care of a parent for a darling child; and when they began to droop (I blush, Maria, to tell it) I have often watered them with my tears.

Such is the account of my own feelings; but who shall tell me those of Savillon? I have seen him look such things!—but, alas! Maria, our wishes are traitors, and give us false intelligence. His soul is too noble to pour itself out in those trivial speeches which the other sex often addresses to ours. Savillon knows
not

not the language of compliment; yet methinks from Savillon it would please. May not a sense of his humble fortune prevent him from speaking what he feels? When we were first acquainted, Julia de Roubigné was a name of some consequence; fallen as she now is, it is now her time to be haughty, and Savillon is too generous to think otherwise. In our most exalted estate, my friend, we are not so difficult to win, as we are sometimes imagined to be: it unfortunately happens, that the best men think us the most so.

I know I am partial to my own cause; yet I am sensible of all the impropriety with which my conduct is attended. My *conduct*, did I call it? It is not my *conduct*; I err but in *thought*. Yet, I fear, I suffered these thoughts at first without alarm.

alarm. They have grown up, unchecked, in my bosom, and now I would controul them in vain. Should I know myself indifferent to Savillon, would not my pride set me free? I sigh, and dare not say that it would.

But there is something tenderer and less tumultuous in that feeling with which I now remember him, than when his presence used to alarm me. Obliged to leave France, where Fortune had denied him an inheritance, he is gone to Martinique, on the invitation of an uncle, who has been several years settled in that island. When I think of the track of ocean which separates us, my head grows dizzy as I think!—that this little heart should have its interests extended so far!

that,

that, on the other side of the Atlantic, there should exist a being, for whom it swells with imaginary hope, and trembles, alas! much oftener trembles, with imaginary fear!

In such a situation, wonder not at my coldness to Montauban. I know not how it is; but, methinks, I esteem him less than I did, from the preposterous reason, that he loves me when I would not have him. I owe him gratitude in return, though I cannot give him love; but I involuntarily refuse him the first, because he asks the latter, which I have not to bestow!

Would that he had never seen your Julia! I expect not a life of happiness, but had looked for one of quiet. There is

is something in the idea even of peaceful sadness, which I could bear without repining ; but I am not made for struggling with perplexity.

LETTER XI.

Julia to Maria.

FROM your letters, Maria, I always find comfort and satisfaction: and never did one arrive more seasonably than the last. When the soul is torn by contrary emotions, it is then we wish for a friend to reconcile us to ourselves: such a friend am I blessed with in you. Advice from my Maria is the language of wisdom without its severity; she can feel what is due to nature, while she speaks what is required of prudence.

I have ever thought as you do, "that it is not enough for a woman not to swerve
from

from the duty of a wife; that to love another more than a husband, is an adultery of the heart; and not to love a husband with undivided affection, is a virtual breach of the vow that unites us."

But I dare not own to my father the attachment from which these arguments are drawn. There is a sternness in his idea of honour, from which I shrink with affright. Images of vengeance and destruction paint themselves to my mind, when I think of his discovering that weakness which I cannot hide from myself. Even before my mother, as his wife, I tremble, and dare not disclose it.

How hard is the fate of your Julia! Unhappy from feelings which she cherished as harmless, which still she cannot
think

think criminal, yet denied even the comfort of revealing, except to her Maria, the cause of her distress! Amidst the wreck of our family's fortunes, I shared the common calamity; must I now be robbed of the little treasure I had saved, spoiled of my peace of mind, and forbid the native freedom of my affections?

I am called to dinner. One of our neighbours is below, a distant relation of Montauban, with his wife and daughter. Another stranger, Lisette says, is also there, a captain of a ship, she thinks, whom she remembers having seen formerly at Belville. Must I go then, and look unmeaning cheerfulness, and talk indifferent things, while my heart is torn with

with secret agitation? To feel distress, is painful; but to dissemble it, is torture.

I have now time to think, and power to express my thoughts—It is midnight, and the world is hushed around me! After the agitation of this day, I feel something silently sad at my heart, that can pour itself out to my friend!

Savillon! cruel Savillon!—but I complain, as if it were falsehood to have forgotten her whom perhaps he never loved.

She too must forget him—Maria! he is the husband of another! That sea-captain, who dined with my father to-day,

day, is just returned from Martinique. With a beating heart, I heard him questioned of Savillon. With a beating heart I heard him tell of the riches he is said to have acquired by the death of that relation with whom he lived; but judge of its sensations, when he added, that Savillon was only prevented by that event, from marrying the daughter of a rich planter, who had been destined for his wife on the very day his uncle died, and whom he was still to marry as soon as decency would permit. "And before this time (said the stranger), he must be her husband."

Before this time!—While I was cherishing romantic hopes! or, at least, while, amidst my distress, I had preserved inviolate the idea of his faith and my own.

own.—But whither does this delusion carry me? Savillon has broken no faith; to me he never pledged it. Hide me, my friend, from the consciousness of my folly, or let it speak till its expiation be made, till I have banished Savillon from my mind.

Must I then banish him from my mind? Must I forget the scenes of our early days, the opinions we formed, the authors we read, the music we played together? There was a time when I was wont to retire from the profanity of vulgar souls, to indulge the remembrance!

I heard somebody tap at my door. I was in that state of mind which every thing terrifies; I fancy I looked terrified, for

for my mother, when she entered, begged me, in a low voice, not to be alarmed.

"I come to see you, Julia (said she), before I go to bed; methought you looked ill at supper."—"Did I, mamma? (said I) I am well enough; indeed I am." She pressed my hand gently; I tried to smile; it was with difficulty I forbore weeping.

"Your mind, child (continued my mother), is too tender, I fear it is, for this bad world. You must learn to conquer some of its feelings, if you would be just to yourself; but I can pardon you, for I know how bewitching they are; but trust me, my love, they must not be indulged too far; they poison the quiet of our lives. Alas! we have too little

little at best! I am aware how ungracious the doctrine is ; but it is not the less true. If you ever have a child like yourself, you will tell her this, in your turn, and she will not believe you."

I was now weeping outright : it was the only answer I could make. My mother embraced me tenderly, and begged me to be calm, and endeavour to rest. I gave her my promise to go soon to bed : I am about to perform it ; but to rest, Maria!—farewell!

LETTER XII.

Julia to Maria.

WHILE I write, my paper is blotted by my tears. They fall not now for myself, but for my father; you know not how he has wrung my heart.

He had another appointment this day with that procureur, who once visited our village before. Sure there is something terrible in that man's business. Alas! I formerly complained of my father's ill-humour, when he returned to us from a meeting with him; I knew not, unjust that I was, what reason he then might have for his chagrin; I am still ignorant of

of their transactions, but have too good ground for making frightful conjectures.

On his return in the evening, he found my mother and me in separate apartments. She has complained of a slight disorder, from cold I believe, these two or three days past, and had lain down on a couch in her own room, till my father should return. I was left alone, and sat down to read my favourite Racine.

"Iphigenia! (said my father, taking up the book) Iphigenia!" He looked on me piteously as he repeated the word. I cannot make you understand how much that single name expressed, nor how much that look. He pressed me to his bosom, and as he kissed me, I felt a tear on his cheek.

100 JULIA DE ROUBIGNE'.

"Your mother is in her own chamber, my love." I offered to go and fetch her: he held my hand fast, as if he would not have me leave him. We stood for some moments thus, till my mother, who had heard his voice, entered the room.

We sat down by the fire, with my father between us. He looked on us alternately, with an affected cheerfulness, and spoke of indifferent things in a tone of gaiety rather unusual to him; but it was easy to see how foreign those appearances were to the real movements of his soul.

There was, at last, a pause of silence, which gave them time to overcome him. We saw a tear, which he was unable to repress,

repress, begin to steal from his eye. "My dearest life!" said my mother, laying hold of his hand and kissing it: I pressed the other in mine. "Yes, (said he) I am still rich in blessings, while these are left me. You, my love, have ever shared my fortune unrepining: I look up to you, as to a superior Being, who for all his benefits accepts of our gratitude as the only recompence we have to make. This—this last retreat, where I looked for peace at least, though it was joined to poverty, we may soon be forced to leave!—Wilt thou still pardon, still comfort the man, whose evil destiny has drawn thee along with it to ruin?—And thou too, my child, my Julia! thou wilt not forsake thy father's grey hairs! Misfortune pursues him to the last: do thou but smile, my cherub, and he can bear

it still." I threw my head on his knees, and bathed them with my tears. "Do not unman me (he cried). I would support my situation as becomes a man. Methinks, for my own part, I could endure any thing—but my wife! my child! can they bear want and wretchedness!" "They can bear any thing with you," said my mother.—I started up, I know not how; I said something, I know not what; but, at that moment, I felt my heart roused as with the sound of a trumpet. My mother stood on one side, looking gently upwards, her hands, which were clasped together, leaning on my father's shoulder. He had one hand in his side, the other pressed on his bosom, his figure seeming to rise above itself, and his eye bent steadily forward.—Methought,

as

as I looked on them, I was above the
fears of humanity!

Le Blanc entered. “ ‘Tis enough,” said my father, taking one or two strides through the room, his countenance still preserving an air of haughtiness. “ Go to my chamber (said he to Le Blanc), I have some business for you.” When they left the room, I felt the weakness of my soul return. I looked on my mother: she turned from me to hide her tears. I fell on her neck, and gave a loose to mine: “ Do not weep, Julia!” was all she could utter, and she wept while she uttered it.

When Le Blanc returned, he was pale as ashes, and his hands shook so, that he could hardly carry in supper. My fa-

ther came in a few minutes after him : he took his place at table in his usual way, and strove to look as he was wont to do. During the time of supper, I observed Le Blanc fix his eye upon him ; and, when he answered some little questions put to him by my father, his voice trembled in his throat.

After being left by ourselves, we were for some time silent. My mother at last spoke through her tears: "Do not, my dearest Roubigné (said she), add to our misfortunes by an unkind concealment of them.—Has any new calamity befallen us ?—When we retired hither, did we not know the worst?"—"I am afraid not (answered he calmly), but my fears may not be altogether just. Do not be alarmed, my love, things may turn out better

better than they appear. I was affected too much before supper, and could not conceal it. There are weak moments, when we are not masters of ourselves. When I looked on my Julia and you, when I thought on those treasures, I was a very coward; but I have resumed my fortitude, and, I think, I can await the decision calmly. You shall know the whole, my love; but let me prevail on you to be comforted in the mean time: let not our distresses reach us before their time." He rung for Le Blanc, and gave him directions about some ordinary matters for next day.

As I went up stairs to my room, I saw that poor fellow standing at the window in the stair-case. "What do you here (said I), Le Blanc?"—"Ah! Miss

Julia (said he), I know not well what I do." He followed me into my room, without my bidding him. " My master has spoken so to me.—When he called me out before supper, as you saw, I went with him into his closet : he wrote something down, as if he were summing up money.—‘ Here are so much wages due to you, Le Blanc (said he, putting the paper into my hand). You shall receive the money now ; for I know not how long these louis may be mine to give you.’—I could not read the figures, I am sure I could not : I was struck blind, as it were, while he spoke so. He held out the gold to me: I drew back ; for I would not have touched it for the world ; but he insisted on my taking it, till I fell on my knees, and intreated him not to kill me by offering such a thing. At length

length he threw it down on his table, and I saw him wipe his eyes with his handkerchief.—‘ My dear master! ’ said I, and I believe I took hold of his hand, for seeing him so, made me forget myself.—He waved his hand for me to leave the room ; and, as I went down into the kitchen, if I had not bursted into tears, I think I should have fainted away.”

What will our destiny do with us ? But I have learned, of late, to look on misery with less emotion. My soul has sunk into a stupid indifference, and sometimes, when she is roused at all, I conceive a sort of pride in meeting distress with fortitude, since I cannot hope for the attainment of happiness. But my father, Maria ! —thus to bear at once the weakness of age, the gripe of poverty,

the buffets of a world with which his spirit is already at war!—there my heart bleeds again! The complaints I have made of those little harshnesses I have sometimes felt from him, rise up to my memory in the form of remorse. Had he been more perfectly indulgent, methinks I should have pitied him less.

I was alarmed, by hearing my mother's bell. She had been seized with a sudden fit of sickness, and had almost fainted. She is now a good deal better, and endeavours to make light of it; but, at this time, I am weaker than usual, and every appearance of danger frightens me. She chid me for not having been a-bed. I leave this open till the morning, when I can inform you how she does.

My

My mother has got up, though against
the advice of my father and me. It may
be fancy, but I think I see her eye lan-
guid and weighed down. I would stifle
even the thoughts of danger, but cannot.
Farewell.

Mrs JULIA DE ROUBIGNE.

LETTER XIII.

Lisette to Maria.

MADAM,

I AM commanded by my dear young lady to write to you, because she is not in a condition to write herself. I am sure, I am little able either. I have a poor head for inditing at any time; and, at present, it is so full of the melancholy scenes I have seen, that it goes round, as it were, at the thoughts of telling them. When I think what a lady I have lost!—To be sure, if ever there was a saint on earth, Madame de Roubigné was she—but Heaven's will be done!

I.bes

JULIA DE ROUBIGNE'. III

I believe Miss Julia wrote you a letter the day she was taken ill. She did not say much, for it is not her way to be troublesome with her complaints; but we all saw by her looks how distressed she was. That night my master lay in a separate apartment, and I sat up by her bed-side; I heard her tossing and restless all night long, and now and then, when she got a few moments sleep, she would moan through it sadly, and presently wake again with a start, as if something had frightened her. In the morning a physician was sent for, who caused her to be blooded, and we thought her the better for it; but that was only for a short time, and next night she was worse than before, and complained of violent pains all over her body, and particularly

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her breast, and did not once shut her eyes to sleep. They took a greater quantity of blood from her now than at first, and in the evening she had a blister put on, and the doctor sat by her, part of the night. All this time Miss Julia was scarce ever out of her mother's chamber, except sometimes for a quarter of an hour, when the doctor begged of her to go, and he and I were both attending my lady. My master indeed, that last night took her away, and prevailed on her to put off her clothes, and go to bed, and I heard him say to her in a whisper, when they had got upon the stairs, "My Julia, have pity on yourself for my sake; let me not lose both:"—And he wept, I saw, as he spoke; and she burst into tears.

The

The fourth day my lady continued much in the same way, but during the night she wandered a good deal, and spoke much of her husband and daughter, and frequently mentioned the Count de Montauban. The doctor ordered some things, I forget their proper name, to be laid to the soles of her feet, which seemed to relieve her head much; for she was more distinct towards morning, and knew me when I gave her drink, and called me by my name, which she had not done before, but had taken me for my young lady; but her voice was fainter than ever, and her physician looked more alarmed, when he visited her, than I had seen him do all the rest of her illness. My master was then in the room, and presently they went out together; my lady called me to her, and asked who

had

had gone out; when I told her, she said,
“I guess the reason; but heaven be praised I can think of it without terror.”

Her daughter entered the room just then; she went up to her mother, and asked how she found herself. “More at ease, my child (said she), but I will not deceive you into hope; I believe this momentary relief is a fatal symptom; my own feelings tell me so, and the doctor’s looks confirm them.”—“Do not speak so, my dearest mother! for Heaven’s sake, do not!”—was all she could answer.

The doctor returned along with my master. He felt my lady’s pulse; Miss Julia looked up wildly in his face: my master turned aside his head; but my lady, sweet angel, was calm and gentle

as a lamb. "Do not flatter me, (said she, when the doctor let go her arm;) I know you think I cannot recover."— "I am not without hopes, madam, (he replied) though, I confess, my fears are stronger than my hopes." My lady looked upwards for a moment, as I have often seen her do in health. Her daughter flung herself on the bed; I thought she had fallen into a swoon, and wanted to lift her up in my arms, though I was all of a tremble, and could hardly support myself. She started up, and would have spoken to her mother; but she wept, and sobbed, and could not. My lady begged her to be composed; my master could not speak, but he laid hold of her hand, and with a sort of gentle force, led her out of the room.

My

My lady complained of a dryness on her mouth and lips : the doctor gave her a glass of water, into which he poured a little somewhat out of a phial ; she thanked him when she had drunk it, and seemed to speak easier : he said, he should leave her for a little : Mons. de Roubigné came in. "Attend my daughter," said she to me ; and I thought she wanted to be alone with my master.

I found Miss Julia in the parlour, leaning on the table, her cheek resting on her hand ; when I spoke, she fell a crying again. Soon after her father came in, and told her that her mother wished to see her : she returned along with my master, and they were some time together.

When

When I was called, I found my lady very low, by reason, as I suppose, she had worn herself out in speaking to them. The doctor said so too, when he returned ; and in the afternoon, when I attended him down stairs, he said to me, " That excellent lady is going fast." He promised to see her again in two hours ; but, before that time, we found she had grown much worse, and had lost her speech altogether : so he was fetched immediately ; and when he came, he said nothing was to be done, but to make her as easy as possible, and offered to stay with her himself, which he did till about three next morning, when the dear good lady expired.

Her daughter fainted away, and it was a long time before the physician could recover her. It is wonderful how my master

master bears up, in order to comfort her: but one may see how heavy his grief is on him for all that. This morning Miss Julia desired me to attend her to the chamber, where her mother's corpse is laid. I was surprised to hear her speak so calmly as she did; and, though I made so free as to dissuade her much at first, yet she persuaded me she could bear it well enough, and I went with her accordingly. But when we came near the door, she stopped, and pulled me back into her room, and leaned on my arm, and fell into a violent fit of weeping; yet, when I begged her to give over thoughts of going, she said she was easy again, and would go. And thus two or three times she went and returned, till, at last, she opened the door, in desperation as one may say, and I went in close

close behind her. The first sight we saw was Mons. de Roubigné at the bed-side, bending over the corpse, and holding one of its hands in his. "Support me, Lisette," cried she; and leaned back on me again. My master turned about as she spoke; his daughter took courage, as it were, then, and walked up to the body, and took the hand that her father had just let drop, and kissed it. "My child!" said he. "My father!" answered my dear young lady, and they clasped one another in their arms. I could not help bursting into tears when I saw them; yet it was not altogether for grief neither: I know not how it was, but I weep when I think of it yet. May Heaven bless them both, and preserve them to support one another!

My

My lady's bell rung, and she asked me if I had written to you. When I told her I had, she enquired if I had sent off the letter, and I was fain to say yes, lest she should ask me to read it, and I knew how bad it must be for her, to hear all I have told your ladyship repeated. I am sure it is a sad scrawl, and little worth your reading, were it not that it concerns so dear a friend of yours as my lady is; and I have told things just as they happened, and as they came up to my mind, which is indeed but in a confused way still. But I ever am, Madam, with respect,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

LISETTE.

LETTER XIV.

Julia to Maria.

AT last, my Maria, I am able to write. In the sad society of my afflicted father, I have found no restraint on my sorrows. We have indulged them to the full: their first turbulence is subsided, and the still quiet grief that now presses on my bosom, is such as my friend may participate.

Your loss is common to thousands. Such is the hackneyed consolation of ordinary minds, unavailing even when it is true. But mine is not common: it is not merely to lose a mother, the best,

¶22 JULIA DE ROUBIGNE'.

the most indulgent of mothers!—Think, Maria, think of your Julia's situation; how helpless, how forlorn she is!—A father pursued by misfortune to the wane of life; but, alas! he looks to her for support! He has outlived the last of his friends, and those who should have been linked to him by the ties of blood, the same fatal disputes, which ruined his fortune, have shaken from his side. Beyond him,—and he is old, and affliction blasts his age!—beyond him, Maria, and but for thee,—the world were desolate around me.

My mother!—you have seen, you have known her. Her gentle, but assured spirit, was the tutelary power to which we ever looked up for comfort and protection: to the last moment it enlightened

ened herself, and guided us. The night before she died, she called me to her bed-side:—“ I feel, my child, (said she) as the greatest bitterness of parting, the thought of leaving you to affliction and distress. I have but one consolation to receive or to bestow: a reliance on that merciful Being, who, in this hour, as in all the past, has not forsaken me! Next to that Being, you will shortly be the only remaining support of the unfortunate Roubigné.—I had, of late, looked on one measure as the means of procuring his age an additional stay; but I will not prescribe your conduct, or warp your heart. I know the purity of your sentiments, the warmth of your filial affection: to those and the guidance of Heaven——” She had spoken thus far with difficulty: her voice now failed in

the attempt. My father came into the room : he sat down by me : she stretched out her hand, and joining ours, which were both laid on the bed, together, she clasped them with a feeble pressure, leaned backward, seemingly worn out with the exertion, and looked up to heaven, as if directing us thither for that assistance which her words had bequeathed us ; her last words ! for after that she could scarcely speak to be heard, and only uttered some broken syllables, till she lost the power of utterance altogether.

These words cannot be forgotten ! they press upon my mind with the sacredness of a parent's dying instructions ! But that measure they suggested—is it not against the dictates of a still superior power ? I feel the thoughts of it as of a crime.

a crime. Should it be so, Maria; or do I mistake the whispers of inclination for the suggestions of conscience? Yet I think I have searched my bosom impartially, and its answer is uniform. Were it otherwise, should it ever be otherwise, what would not your Julia do, to smooth the latter days of a father, on whose grey hairs distresses are multiplied!

Methinks, since this last blow, he is greatly changed. That haughtiness of spirit, which seemed to brave, but, in reality, was irritated by misfortune, has left him. He looks calmly upon things; they affect him more, but hurt him less; his tears fall oftener, but they are less terrible than the full gloom which used to darken his aspect. I can now mingle mine with his, free to affliction, without

uneasiness or fear; and those offices of kindness, which once my piety exacted, are now the offering of my heart.

Montauban has behaved, on this occasion, as became his character. How perfect were it, but for that weakness which regards your Julia! He came to see my father the day after that on which my mother died. "I will not endeavour (said he) to stop the current of your grief: that comfort, which the world offers at times like these, flows not from feeling, and cannot be addressed to it. Your sorrow is just: I come to give you leisure to indulge it: employ me in those irksome offices, which distress us more than the tears they oblige us to dry: think nothing too mean to impose on me, that can any how relieve my friend."

And

And this friend his daughter is forced to deprive him of. Such at least is the common pride of the sex, that will not brook any other connection where one is rejected. I am assailed by motives on every hand; but my own feelings are still unconquered. Support them, my ever-faithful Maria, if they are just; if not—but they cannot be unjust.

The only friend, of my own sex, whom I possessed besides thee, is now no more! We needed no additional tie; yet, methinks, in the grief of my heart, I lean upon yours with increasing affection. Thou too—I will not say pity—thou shalt love me more.

LETTER XV.

Julia to Maria.

I Have, this moment, received your answer to my last. Ah! my friend, it answers not as I wished. Is this frowardness in me, to hear, with pleasure, only the arguments on one side, when my conduct should be guided by those on both?

You say, "It is from the absence of Savillon, that the impression he had made on my heart has gained its present strength; that the contemplation of distant objects is always stronger than the sense of present ones; and that, were I

to

to see him now, were I daily to behold him the husband of another, I should soon grow tranquil at the sight. That it is injustice to myself, and a want of that proper pride, which should be the constant attendant of our sex, to suffer this unhappy attachment to overcome my mind; and that, after looking calmly on the world, you cannot allow so much force to those impressions, as our youth was apt to suppose in them. That they are commonly vanquished by an effort to vanquish them; and that the sinking under their pressure, is one of those diseases of the mind, which, like certain diseases of the body, the exercise of its better faculties will very soon remove."

There is reason in all this; but while you argue from reason, I must decide from

my feelings. In every one's own case, there is a rule of judging, which is not the less powerful that one cannot express it.—I insist not on the memory of Savillon; I can forget him, I think I can—time will be kind that way—it is fit I should forget him—he is happy, as the husband of another.—But should I wed any man, be his worth what it may, if I feel not that lively preference for him, which waits not for reasoning to persuade its consent? The suggestions I have heard of Montauban's unwearied love, his uncommon virtues, winning my affections in a state of wedlock, I have always held a very dangerous experiment; there is equivocation in those vows, which unite us to a husband, our affection for whom we leave to contingency.—“ But I already esteem and admire him.”—It is
most

most true;—why is he not contented with my esteem and admiration? If those feelings are to be ripened into love, let him wait that period when my hand may be his without a blush. This I have already told him; he almost owned the injustice of his request, but pleaded the ardor of passion in excuse. Is this fair dealing, Maria? that his feelings are to be an apology for his suit, while mine are not allowed to be a reason for refusal?

I am called away by my father; I heard the count's voice below some time before. There was a solemnity in my father's manner of asking me down, which indicates something important in this visit. You shall hear what that is

G 6 before .

before this letter is closed.—Again! he is come to fetch me.

Maria! let me recover my surprise! Yet why should I be surprised at the generosity of Montauban? I know the native nobleness of his soul.—Was it in such a girl as me to enfeeble it so long?

My father led me into the parlour. Montauban was standing in a pensive posture; he made me a silent bow. I was placed in a chair, standing near another, which the count had occupied before: he sat down. My father walked to the window; his back was to us. Montauban put himself once or twice into the attitude of speaking; but we were still silent.

My

My father turned and approached us.
“The count has something to communicate, Julia. Would you choose, sir, that it should be addressed to her alone?”
“No (answered he), it is an expiation to both, and both should hear it made. I fear, I have, unwillingly, been the cause of disquiet to a family, whose society, for some time past, has been one of the chief sweeteners of my life. They know my gratitude, for the blessing of that intimacy they were kind enough to allow me. When I wished for a tenderer connexion, they could not blame my wish; but, when I pressed it so far as to wound their peace, I was unworthy of the esteem they had formerly given, an esteem I cannot now bear to lose. When I cease my suit, Miss Julia, let it speak, not a diminution, but an increase of my affection.

fection. If that regard, which you often had the generosity to confess for me, was impaired by my addresses, let me recover it by this sacrifice of my hopes; and, while I devote to your quiet the solicitations of my love, let it confirm to me every privilege of the most sacred friendship."

Such were the words of Montauban. I know not what answer I made: I remember a movement of admiration, and no more. At that instant, he seemed nobler than ever; and when, in spite of his firmness, a tear broke forth, my pity almost carried me beyond esteem. How happy might this man make another! Julia de Roubigné is fated to be miserable!



LETTER XVI.

*The Count de Montauban to Mons. Du-
vergne at Paris.*



I HAVE sent only three of the bills I proposed, in my last, to remit; that for five thousand, and the other for twelve thousand livres, at short dates, I have retained, as, I believe, I shall have use for them here. You may discount some of the others, if you want money for immediate use, which however, I imagine, will not be the case.

I beg you may, immediately on receipt of this, send the inclosed letter as directed.

directed. The name in the superscription I have made Vervette, though my steward, from whom I take it, is not sure if it be exactly that ; but, as he tells me the man is a procureur of some practice, and is certain as to the place of his residence, I imagine, you will have no difficulty in finding him. I wish my letter to reach him in Paris ; but if you hear that he has gone into the country, send me notice by the messenger, who is to fetch down my uncle's papers, by whom I shall receive your answer sooner than by post.



LETTER XVII.

Lisette to Maria.

MADAM,

I MAKE bold to write this, in great haste, because I am sensible of your friendship for my lady, and that you will thank me for giving you an opportunity of trying to serve her father and her in their present distress. She, poor lady, is in such a situation as not to be able to write; and besides, she is so noble minded, that I dare be sworn she would not tell you the worst, lest it should look like asking your assistance.

How shall I tell you, Madam? My poor master is in danger of being forced away

away from us, and thrown into prison. A debt, it seems, owing to some people in Paris, on account of expences about that unfortunate law-suit, has been put into the hands of a procureur, who will not hear of any delay in the payment of it ; and he was here this morning, and told my master, as Le Blanc overheard, that, if he could not procure the money in three hours time, he must attend him to a jail. My master wished to conceal this from his daughter, and desired the procureur to do his duty, without any noise or disturbance ; but Le Blanc had scarcely gone up stairs, when she called him, and enquired about that man's business, and he could not hide it, his heart was so full, and so he told her all that had passed below. Then she flew down to her father's room, and hung about him

him in such a manner, weeping and sobbing, that it would have melted the heart of a savage, and so, to be sure, I said to the procureur; but he did not mind me a bit, nor my lady neither, though she looked so as I never beheld in all my life, and I was terrified to see her so, and said all I could to comfort her, but to no purpose. At last, a servant of the procureur brought him a letter, and presently he went out of the house, but left two of his attendants to watch that my master should not escape; and they are now here, and they say that he cannot grant any respite; but that, as sure as can be, when he returns, he will take away Mons. de Roubigné to prison. I send this by a boy, a nephew of Le Blanc's, who serves a gentleman in this province, who is just now going post to

Paris,

Paris, and the boy called on his way, by good fortune, to see his uncle. I am, in haste, your very faithful and obedient servant,

LISETTE.

My lady is much more composed now, and so is my master. The procureur has not returned yet, and I have a sort of hope; yet God knows whence it should be, except from your ladyship.

LETTER XVIII.

Lisette to Maria.

TO be sure, Madam, you must have been much affected with the distress in our family, of which I informed you in my last, considering what a friendship there is between my dear lady and you. And now I am much vexed, that I should have given you so much uneasiness in vain, and send this to let you know of the happy deliverance my master has met with, from that most generous of men the count de Montauban; I say, the most generous of men, as to be sure he is, to advance so large a sum without any near prospect of being repaid, and without ever

ever being asked to do such a favour; for I verily believe my master would die before he would ask such a favour of any one, so high-minded he is, notwithstanding all his misfortunes. He is just now gone to see the count, for that noble-hearted gentleman would not come to our house, lest, as Mons. de Roubigné said, he should seem to triumph in the effects of his own generosity. Indeed, the thing was done as if it had been by witchcraft, without one of this family suspecting such a matter; and the procureur never came back at all, only sent a paper, discharging the debt, to one of the men he had left behind, who, upon that, behaved very civilly, and went away with much better manners, forsooth, than they came; but Le Blanc followed them to the village, where they met the

procureur, and thus it was that we discovered the debt to have been paid by the count, who, it seems, had sent that letter, but without a name, which the procureur received, when he left us at the time I wrote your ladyship last.

Mons. de Roubigné is returned from his visit to the count de Montauban, and has been a long time closeted with my lady, and, to be sure, something particular must have passed, but what it is I cannot guess; only I am certain it is something more than common, because I was in the way when they parted, and my lady passed me, and I saw by her looks that there had been something. When she went into her own chamber I followed her, and there she sat down, leaning

her

her arm on her dressing-table, and gave such a sigh, as I thought her heart would have burst with it. Then I thought I might speak, and asked if she was not well. "Very well, Lisette," said she ; but she said it as if she was not well for all that, breathing strongly as she spoke the words, as one does when one has run one's self out of breath. "Leave me, child, (said she) I will call you again by and by." And so I left her as she bid me, and as I went out of the room, shutting the door softly behind me, I heard her start up from her chair, and say to herself, "The lot is cast!" I think that was it.

My master has been all this while in his study, writing, and just now he called

L.C

Le Blanc, and gave him a letter for the count de Montauban, and Le Blanc told me, as he passed, that Mons. de Roubigné looked gayer, and more in spirits than usual, when he gave it him. My lady is still in her chamber alone, and has never called me, as she promised. Poor dear soul ! I am sure I would do any thing to serve her, that I would, and well I may, for she is the kindest, sweetest lady to me, and so indeed she is to every body.

And now, Madam, I am sure I should ask a thousand pardons, for using the freedom to write to you in such a manner, just by starts, as things happen. But I am sensible your ladyship will not impute my doing so to any want of respect, but only to my desiring to give your ladyship

an account of the situation of my lady, and of this family, which you were so condescending as to say, after my first letter, you were much obliged to me for giving you, and begged that it might be in my own style, which, to be sure, is none of the best ; but which your ladyship will be so good as pardon, especially as I am, when I write to you about these matters, in a flutter, as one may say, as well as having little time to order my expressions for the best. I am, honoured Madam,

With due respect,

Your faithful

And obedient servant,

LISETTE.

LETTER XIX.

Julia to Maria.

IN the intricacies of my fate or of my conduct, I have long been accustomed to consider you my support and my judge. For some days past these have come thick upon me; but I could not find composure enough to state them coolly even to myself. At this hour of midnight, I have summoned up a still recollection of the past; and with you, as my other conscience, I will unfold and examine it.

The ready zeal of my faithful Lifette has, I understand, saved me a recital of

H 2 the

the distress, in which my father found himself involved, from the consequences of that law-suit we have so often lamented. I could only share it with him; but a more effectual friend stepped forth in the count de Montauban. His generosity relieved my father, and gave him back to freedom and your Julia.

The manner of his doing this, was such as the delicacy of a mind, jealous of its own honour, would prompt in the cause of another's. I thought I saw a circumstance, previous to the count's performing it, which added to that delicacy. My father did not then perceive this; it was not till he waited on Montauban, that the force of it struck his mind.

When

When he returned home, I saw some remains of that pride, which formerly rankled under the receipt of favours it was unable to return. " My Julia (said he), your father is unhappy, every way unhappy ; but it is fit I should be humble—Pierre de Roubigné must learn humility !" He uttered these words in a tone that frightened me ; I could not speak. He saw me confused, I believe, and, putting on a milder aspect, took my hand and kissed it.—" Heaven knows, that, for myself, I rate not life or liberty at much ;—but, when I thought what my child must suffer—I alone am left to protect her—and I am old and weak, and must ask for that assistance which I am unable to repay." " The generous, Sir, (said I) know from their own hearts what yours can feel : all beyond is

accident alone." "The generous, indeed, my child! but you know not all the generosity of Montauban. When he tore himself from those hopes which his love had taught him; when he renounced his pretensions to that hand, which I know can alone confer happiness on his life; it was but for a more delicate opportunity of relieving thy father.—I could not (said he), while I sought your daughter's love, bear the appearance of purchasing it by a favour; now, when I have renounced it for ever, I am free to the offices of friendship.—Had you seen him, Julia, when he pronounced this *for ever!* great as his soul is, he wept! by Heaven he wept, at pronouncing it!—These tears, Julia, these tears of my friend!—Would I had met my dungeon in silence!—they had not torn my heart thus!"

Maria

Maria, mine was swelled to a sort of enthusiastic madness —

I fell at his feet. —

"No, my father, they shall not.— Amidst the fall of her family, your daughter shall not stand aloof in safety. She should have shared the prison of her father in the pride of adversity; behold her now the partner of his humiliation! Tell the count de Montauban, that Julia de Roubigné offers that hand to his generosity, which she refused to his solicitation;—tell him also, she is above deceit: she will not conceal the small value of the gift. 'Tis but the offering of a wretch, who would somehow requite the sufferings of her father, and the services of his friend. If he shall now

reject it, that ugly debt, which his unhappiness lays us under, will be repaid in the debasement she endures; if he accepts of it as it is, tell him its mistress is not ignorant of the duty that should attend it."

My father seemed to recover at my words; yet surprise was mixed with the satisfaction his countenance expressed. "Are these your sentiments, my love?" pressing my hand closer in his—The heroism of duty was wasted—I answered him with my tears. "Speak (said he), my Julia, coolly; and let not the distresses of your father warp your resolution. He can endure any thing, even his gratitude shall be silenced."—My fortitude revived again.—"There is some weakness, Sir, attends even our best resolves:

resolves : mine are not without it ; but they are fixed, and I have spoken them." He asked, if he might acquaint Mons. de Montauban. " Immediately, Sir (I answered , if you please ; the sooner he knows my resolution, the more will he see it flowing from my heart." My father went into his study, and wrote a letter, which he read to me. It was not all I could have wished, yet I could not mend it by correction. Who shall give words to the soul at such a time ? My very thoughts are not accurate expressions of what I feel : there is something busy about my heart, which I cannot reduce into thinking.—Oh ! Maria !

Montauban came immediately on receipt of this letter ; we did not expect him that night ; we were at supper. In what

a situation was your Julia while it lasted? In this terrible interval, I was obliged to meet his eye sometimes, in addressing ordinary civilities to him. To see him, to speak to him thus, while the fate of my life was within the power of a few little words, was such torture, as it required the utmost of my resolution to bear. My father saw it, and put as speedy an end to our meal as possible.— We were left alone.

My father spoke first, not without hesitation. Montauban was still more confused; but it was the confusion of a happy man. He spoke some half sentences about the delicacy of my sentiments and his own, but was entangled there, and, I think, not able to extricate himself. At last, turning fuller towards me, who

sat

sat the silent victim of the scene (why should I score through that word when writing to you? yet it is a bad one, and I pray you to forgive it), he said, he knew his own unworthiness of that hand, which my generosity had now allowed him to hope for; but that every endeavour of his future life--the rest was common place; for his sex have but one sort of expression for the exulting modesty of success.—My father put my hand in his—I was obliged to raise my eyes from the ground and look on him; his were bent earnestly on me: there was too, too much joy in them, Maria; mine could not bear them long. “ That hand (said my father) is the last treasure of Roubigné. Fallen as his fortunes are, not the wealth of worlds had purchased it: to your friendship, to your virtue, he

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is blessed in bequeathing it."—"I know its value, said the count, and receive it as the dearest gift of Heaven and you." He kissed my hand with rapture—

It is done, and I am Montauban's for ever!—

LETTER XX.

Montauban to Segarva.

GIVE me joy, Segarva, give me joy—
the lovely Julia is mine. Let not
the torpid considerations of prudence,
which your last letter contained, rise up
to check the happiness of your friend,
or that which his good fortune will be-
stow on you. Trust me, thy fears are
groundless—didst thou but know her
as I do!—Perhaps, I am tenderer that
way than usual; but there were some of
your fears I felt a blush in reading. Talk
not of the looseness of marriage-vows
in France, nor compare her with those
women of it, whose heads are giddy with
the

the follies of fashion, and whose hearts are debauched by the manners of its votaries. Her virtue was ever above the breath of suspicion, and I dare pledge my life, it will ever continue so. But that is not enough; I can feel, as you do, that it is not enough. I know the nobleness of her soul, the delicacy of her sentiments. She would not give me her hand except from motives of regard and affection, were I master of millions. I rejoice that her own situation is such, as infers no suspicion of interestedness in me; were she not Julia de Roubigné, I would not have wedded her with the world for her dower..

You talk of her former reluctance; but I am not young enough to imagine that it is impossible for a marriage to be happy

happy without that glow of rapture, which lovers have felt, and poets described. Those starts of passion are not the basis for wedded felicity, which wisdom would chuse, because they are only the delirium of a month, which possession destroys, and disappointment follows. I have perfect confidence in the affection of Julia, though it is not of that intemperate kind, which some brides have shewn. Had you seen her eyes, how they spoke, when her father gave me her hand! there was still reluctance in them, a reluctance more winning than all the flush of consent could have made her. Modesty and fear, esteem and gratitude, darkened and enlightened them by turns; and those tears, those silent tears, which they shed, gave me a more sacred bond of her attachment, than it

was

was in the power of words to have formed.

I have sometimes allowed myself to think, or rather I have supposed you thinking, it might be held an imputation on the purity of her affection, that from an act of generosity towards her father, (with the circumstances of which I was under the necessity of acquainting you in my last) her hand became rather a debt of gratitude than a gift of love. But there is a deception in those romantic sounds, which tell us, that pure affection should be unbiassed in its disposal of a lover or a mistress. If they say, that affection is a mere involuntary impulse, neither waiting the decisions of reason, or the dissuasives of prudence, do they not in reality degrade us to machines, which are

are blindly actuated by some uncontrollable power? If they allow a woman reasonable motives for her attachment, what can be stronger than those sentiments which excite her esteem, and those proofs of them which produce her gratitude?

But why do I thus reason on my happiness? I feel no fears, no suspicion of alloy to it; and I will not search for them in abstract opinion, or in distant conjecture.

Tuesday next is fixed for the day that is to unite us; the shew and ceremony that mingle so ill with the feelings of a time like this, our situation here renders unnecessary. A few of those simple ornaments, in which my Julia meets the gaze of the admiring rustics around us, are
more

more congenial to her beauty than all the trappings of vanity or magnificence. We propose passing a week or two here, before removing to Montauban, where I must then carry my wife, to shew my people their mistress, and receive that sort of homage, which I hope I have taught them to pay from the heart. Those relations of my family, who live in that neighbourhood, must come and learn to love me better than they did. Methinks I shall now be more easily pleased with them than I formerly was. I know not if it is nobler to despise insignificant people, than to bear with them coolly; but I believe it is much less agreeable. The asperities of our own mind recoil on itself. Julia has shewn me the bliss of losing them.

Could

Could I hope for my Segarva at Montauban?—Much as I doat on my lovely bride, there wants the last approval of my soul, till he smiles on this marriage and blesses it. I know, there needs only his coming thither to grant this.—I anticipate your answer, that now it is impossible; but let it be a debt on the future, which *the first* of your leisure is to pay. Meantime believe me happy, and add to my happiness by telling me of your own.

LETTER XXI.

Julia to Maria.

WHY should I tease you by writing of those little things which tease me in the doing? They tease, yet perhaps they are useful. At this time, I am afraid of a moment's leisure to be idle, and am even pleased with the happy impertinence of Lifette, whose joy, on my account, gives her tongue much freedom. I call her often, when I have little occasion for her service, merely that I may have her protection from solitude.

For the same reason I am somehow afraid of writing to you, which is only another

another sort of thinking. Do not therefore expect to hear from me again till after Tuesday at soonest.—Maria! you remember our fancy at school of shewing our friendship, by setting down remarkable days of one another's little joys and disappointments.—Set down *Tuesday next* for your Julia—but leave its property blank.—Fate will fill it up one day!

LETTER XXII.

Lisette to Maria.

MADAM,

I Hope my lady and you will both excuse my writing this, to give you notice of the happy event, which has happened in our family. I made so bold as to ask her if she intended writing to you. "Lisette (said she), I cannot write, I cannot indeed." So I have taken up the pen, who am a poor unworthy correspondent; but your ladyship's goodness has made allowances for me in that way before, and, I hope, will do so still.

The

The ceremony was performed yesterday. I think I never saw a more lovely figure than my lady's; she is a sweet angel at all times, but I wish your ladyship had seen how she looked then. She was dressed in a white muslin night-gown, with striped laylock and white ribbands: her hair was kept in the loose way you used to make me dress it for her at Belleville, with two waving curls down one side of her neck, and a braid of little pearls, you made her a present of them. And to be sure, with her dark-brown locks resting upon it, her bosom looked as pure white as the driven snow.—And then her eyes, when she gave her hand to the count! they were cast half down, and you might see her eye-lashes, like strokes of a pencil, over the white of her skin

skin—the modest gentleness, with a sort of a sadness too, as it were, and a gentle heave of her bosom at the same time.—O! madam, you know I have not language, as my lady and you have, to describe such things; but it made me cry, in truth it did, for very joy and admiration. There was a tear in my master's eye too, though I believe two happier hearts were not in France, than his and the count de Montauban's. I am sure, I pray for blessings on all three, with more earnestness, that I do, than for myself.

It seems, it is settled that the new-married couple shall not remain long here, but set out, in a week or two hence, for the count's principal seat, about six leagues distant

distant from his house in our neighbourhood, which is not large enough for entertaining the friends, whose visits they must receive on this joyful occasion. I fancy Mons. de Roubigné will be much with them, though, I understand, he did not choose to accept of the count's pressing invitation to live with his daughter and him; but an elderly lady, a relation of my dear mistress that is gone, is to keep house for him.

I must break off now, for I hear my lady's bell ring, and your ladyship may believe we are all in a sort of buz here. I dare to say she will not fail to write to you soon; but mean time, hoping you will accept of this poor scrawling letter of mine, I remain, with due respect,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,
LISETTE.

P. S. My lady is to have me with her at the Chateau de Montauban; and, to be sure, I am happy to attend her, as I could willingly spend all the days of my life with so kind a lady, and so good conditioned. The count likewise has been so good to me, as I can't tell how, and said, that he hoped my mistress and I would never part, "if she does not grow jealous, (said he merrily) of so handsome a maid." And at that we all laughed, as to be sure we might. My lady will be a happy lady, I am sure.

LETTER XXIII.

Julia to Maria.

MY friend will, by this time, be chiding me for want of attention to her; yet, in truth, she has seldom been absent from my thoughts. Were we together but for a single hour, I should have much to tell you; but there is an intricacy in my feelings on this change of situation, which, freely as I write to you, I cannot manage on paper. I can easily imagine what you would first desire to know, though perhaps it is the last question you would put. The *happiness* of your Julia, I know, is ever the warmest object of your wishes.—Ask me not, why

I cannot answer even this directly.—Be satisfied when I tell you, that I ought to be happy.—Montauban has every desire to make me so.—

One thing I wish to accomplish towards his peace and mine. The history of this poor heart I have entrusted only to your memory and my own: I will endeavour, though I know with how much difficulty, henceforth to forget it for ever. You must assist me, by holding it a blank, which recollection is no more to fill up. I know the weakness of my sex; myself of that sex the weakest: I will not run the risk of calling up ideas, which were once familiar, and may not now be the less dangerous, nor the less readily listened to, for the pain they have caused. My husband has now a
right

right to every better thought ; it were unjust to embitter those hours, which are but half the property of Julia de Montauban, with the remembrance of former ones, which belonged to sadness and Julia de Roubigné.

We are on the eve of our departure for the family castle of Mons. de Montauban. My father, whose happiness, at present, is a flattering testimony, as well as a support to my piety, accompanies us thither, but is soon to return home, where our cousin, La Pelliere, whom you may remember having seen with my mother in Paris, is to keep house for him. This separation I cannot help looking to as a calamity ; yet, I believe, his reasons for it are just. What a change in a woman's situation does this momentous connexion

I 3 make ?

make?—I will think no more of it.—
Farewell.

Yet a few words, to own my folly at least, if I cannot amend it. I went to assort some little articles of dress for carrying home with me; while I was rummaging out a drawer to find one of them, a little picture of Savillon, drawn for him when a boy, by a painter who was accidentally in our neighbourhood, crossed me in the way. You cannot easily imagine how this circumstance disconcerted me. I shut the drawer as if it had contained a viper; then opened it again; and again the countenance of Savillon, mild and thoughtful (for even then it was thoughtful), met my view!—Was it a consciousness of *guilt* that turned my eye invol-

involuntarily to the door of the apartment?—Can there be any in accidentally thinking of Savillon?—Yet I fear I looked too long, and too impassionedly on this miniature. It was drawn with something sorrowful in the countenance, and methought it looked then more sorrowful than ever.

The question comes strong upon me, how I should like that my husband had seen this.—In truth, Maria, I fear my keeping this picture is improper; yet at the time it was painted, there was one drawn for me by the same hand, and we exchanged resemblances without any idea of impropriety. Ye unfeeling decorums of the world!—Yet it is dangerous, is it not, my best monitor, to think thus?—Yet, were I to return the picture,

would it not look like a suspicion of myself?—I will keep it, till you convince me I should not.

Montauban and virtue! I am your's. Suffer but one sigh to that weakness, which I have not yet been able to overcome. My heart, I trust, is innocent—blame it not for being unhappy.

LETTER XXIV.

Julia to Maria.

MY father was with me this morning, in my chamber, for more than an hour. We sat, sometimes silent, sometimes speaking interrupted sentences, and tears were frequently all the intercourse we held. Lisette coming in, to acquaint us that Montauban was in the parlour, waiting us, at length put an end to our interview. "Julia (said my father), I imagined I had much to say to you; but the importance of my thoughts, on your behalf, stifles my expression of them. There are moments when I cannot help looking to that separation, which your

I 5 marriage:

marriage will make between us, as if it were the loss of my child ; yet I have fortitude enough to resist the impression, and to reflect that she is going to be happy with the worthiest of men. My instruction for your conduct in that state you have just entered into, your own sentiments, I trust, would render unnecessary, were they in no other way supplied ; but I discovered lately, in your mother's bureau, a paper which still farther supersedes their necessity. It contains some advices, which experience and observation had enabled her to give, and her regard for you had prompted her to write down. 'Tis, however, only a fragment, which accident or diffidence of herself has prevented her completing ; but it is worthy of your serious perusal, and you

you will read it with more warmth than if it came from a general instructor." He left the paper with me; I have read it with the care, with the affection it deserves; I send a copy of it now, as I would every good thing, for the participation of my friend. She cannot read it with the interest of a daughter; but she will find it no cold, nor common lecture. It speaks, if I am not too partial to the best of mothers, the language of prudence, but not of artifice; it would mend the heart by sentiment, not cover it with dissimulation. She, for whose use it was written, has need of such a monitor, and would listen to no other; if she has paid any debt to prudence, it was not from the obligation of wisdom, but the impulse of feeling.

“ For my Daughter Julia.

“ Before this can reach you, the hand that writes it, and the heart that dictates, shall be mouldering in the grave. I mean it to supply the place of some cautions, which I should think it my duty to deliver to you, should I live to see you a wife. The precepts it contains, you have often heard me inculcate; but I know that general observations on a possible event, have much less force than those which apply to our immediate condition. In the fate of a woman, marriage is the most important crisis: it fixes her in a state, of all others the most happy, or the most wretched; and though mere precept can perhaps do little in any case, yet

yet there is a natural propensity to try its efficacy in all. She who writes this paper, has been long a wife, and a mother; the experience of one, and the anxiety of the other, prompt her instructions; and she has been too happy in both characters to have much doubt of their truth, or fear of their reception.

“ Sweetness of temper, affection to a husband, and attention to his interests, constitute the duties of a wife, and form the basis of matrimonial felicity. These are indeed the texts, from which every rule for attaining this felicity is drawn. The charms of beauty, and the brilliancy of wit, though they may captivate in the mistress, will not long delight in the wife: they will shorten even their own transitory reign, if, as I have seen in many

many wives, they shine more for the attraction of every body else than of their husbands. Let the pleasing of that one person be a thought never absent from your conduct. If he loves you as you would wish he should, he will bleed at heart should he suppose it for a moment withdrawn: if he does not, his pride will supply the place of love, and his resentment that of suffering.

"Never consider a trifle what may tend to please him. The great articles of duty he will set down as his own; but the lesser attentions he will mark as favours; and trust me, for I have experienced it, there is no feeling more delightful to one's-self, than that of turning those little things to so precious a use.

"If

"If you marry a man of a certain sort, such as the romance of young minds generally paints for a husband, you will deride the supposition of any possible decrease in the ardour of your affections. But wedlock, even in its happiest lot, is not exempted from the common fate of all sublunary blessings ; there is ever a delusion in hope, which cannot abide with possession. The rapture of extravagant love will evaporate and waste ; the conduct of the wife must substitute in its room other regards, as delicate, and more lasting. I say, the conduct of the wife ; for marriage, be a husband what he may, reverses the prerogative of sex ; his will expect to be pleased, and ours must be sedulous to please.

" This

" This privilege a good natured man may waive : he will feel it, however, due; and third persons will have penetration enough to see, and may have malice enough to remark, the want of it in his wife. He must be a husband unworthy of you, who could bear the degradation of suffering this in silence. The idea of power on either side, should be totally banished from the system : it is not sufficient, that the husband should never have occasion to regret the want of it ; the wife must so behave, that he may never be conscious of possessing it.

" But my Julia, if a mother's fondness deceives me not, stands not much in need of cautions like these. I cannot allow myself the idea of her wedding a man, on whom she would not wish to be dependent,

ent, or whose inclinations a temper like hers would desire to controul. She will be more in danger from that softness, that sensibility of soul, which will yield perhaps too much for the happiness of both. The office of a wife includes the exertion of a friend: a good one must frequently strengthen and support that weakness, which a bad one would endeavour to overcome. There are situations, where it will not be enough to love, to cherish, to obey: she must teach her husband to be at peace with himself, to be reconciled to the world, to resist misfortune, to conquer adversity.

“ Alas! my child, I am here an instruc-tress but too well skilled! These tears, with which this paper is soiled, fell not in the presence of your father, though,
now,

now, they but trace the remembrance of what, then, it was my lot to feel. Think it not impossible to restrain your feelings, because they are strong. The enthusiasm of feeling will sometimes overcome distresses, which the cold heart of prudence had been unable to endure.

" But *misfortune* is not always *miser*y. I have known this truth; I am proud to believe, that I have sometimes taught it to Roubigné. Thanks be to that Power, whose decrees I reverence! He often tempered the anguish of our sufferings, till there was a sort of luxury in feeling them. Then is the triumph of wedded love!--the tie that binds the happy may be dear; but that which links the unfortunate is tenderness unutterable.

" There

" There are afflictions less easy to be endured, which your mother has not experienced: those which a husband inflicts, and the best wives feel the most severely. These, like all our sharpest calamities, the fortitude that can resist, can only cure. Complainings debase her who suffers, and harden him who aggrieves. Let not a woman always look for their cause in the injustice of her lord: they may proceed from many trifling errors in her own conduct, which virtue cannot blame, though wisdom must regret. If she makes this discovery, let them be amended without a thought if possible, at any rate without an expression, of merit in amending them. In this, and in every other instance, it must never be forgotten, that the only government allowed on our side, is that of gentleness.

gentleness and attraction ; and that its power, like the fabled influence of imaginary beings, must be invisible to be complete.

" Above all, let a wife beware of communicating to others any want of duty or tenderness, she may think she has perceived in her husband. This untwists, at once, those delicate cords, which preserve the unity of the marriage-engagement. Its sacredness is broken for ever, if third parties are made witnesses of its failings, or umpires of its disputes. It may seem almost profane in me to confess, that once, when, through the malice of an enemy, I was made, for a short time, to believe, that my Roubigné had wronged me, I durst not, even in my prayers to Heaven, petition for a restoration

tion of his love; I prayed to be made a better wife: when I would have said, a more beloved one, my utterance failed me for the word."



LETTER XXV.

Julia to Maria.

WE have got to the end of our journey; and I am now the mistress of this mansion. Our journey was too short, and too slow; I wished for some mechanical relief from my feelings in the rapidity of a post-chaise; our progress was too stately to be expeditious, and we reached not this place, though but six leagues distant, till the evening.

Methinks I have suffered a good deal; but my heart is not callous yet; else wherefore was it wrung so, at leaving my father's peaceful retreat? I did not trust

trust myself with looking back ; but I was too well acquainted with the objects, not to recollect every tree from the side-window as we passed. A little ragged boy, who keeps some sheep of my father's, opened the gate for us at the end of the furthermost inclosure ; he pulled off his hat, which he had adorned with some gay coloured ribands in honour of the occasion ; Montauban threw money into it, and the boy followed us ; for some time, with a number of blessings. When he turned back, methought I envied him his return. The full picture of the place we had left, rose before me ; it needed all my resolution, and all my fears of offending, to prevent my weeping outright. At our dinner on the road, I was very busy, and affected to be very much pleased ; La Pelliere was a lucky companion

panion for me; you know how full she is of observation on trifles. When we approached the house, she spoke of every thing, and praised every thing; I had nothing to do but to assent.

We entered between two rows of lime-trees, at the end of which is the gate of the house, wide and rudely magnificent; its large leaves were opened to receive us by an old but fresh-looking servant, who seemed too honest to be polite, and did not shew me quite so much courtesy as some mistresses would have expected. All these circumstances however were in a style, which my friend has heard me commend; yet was I weak enough, not perfectly to relish them when they happened to myself. There was a presaging gloom about this mansion which filled my approach

proach with terror ; and when Montauban's old domestic opened the coach-door, I looked upon him as a criminal might do on the messenger of death. My dreams ever since have been full of horror ; and while I write these lines, the creaking of the pendulum of the great clock in the hall, sounds like the knell of your devoted Julia.

I expect you to rally me on my ideal terrors. You may remember, when we used to steal a midnight hour's conversation together, you would laugh at my foreboding of a short period to my life, and often jeeringly tell me, I was born to be a great-grandmother in my time. I know the foolishness of this impression, though I have not yet been able to

conquer it. But to me it is not the source of disquiet; I never feel more possessed of myself than at those moments when I indulge it the most. Why should I wish for long life? why should so many wish for it? Did we sit down to number the calamities of this world; did we think how many wretches there are of disease, of poverty, of oppression, of vice, (alas! I fear there are some even of virtue) we should change one idea of evil, and learn to look on death as a friend.

This might a philosopher accomplish; but a Christian, Maria, can do more. Religion has taught me to look beyond dissolution. Religion has removed the darkness that covered the sepulchres of our

our fathers, and filled that gloomy void which was only the retreat of hopeless affliction, with prospects, in contemplation of which, even the felicity of the world dwindles into nothing !

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



